

# LAWRENCETBD

An urban renewal plan for a stronger future for Lawrence.  
*Un plan de renovación urbana para un mejor futuro para Lawrence.*

## LAWRENCETBD URBAN RENEWAL PLAN



Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Charles D. Baker, Governor ♦ Karyn E. Polito, Lt. Governor ♦ Chrystal Komegay, Undersecretary

**MAY 03 2017**

Honorable Daniel Rivera  
Mayor of Lawrence  
City Hall  
200 Common Street  
3rd Floor Room, 309  
Lawrence, Massachusetts 01840

Kristen Harol  
Chair  
Lawrence Redevelopment Authority  
200 Common Street  
3rd Floor Room, 309  
Lawrence, Massachusetts 01840

**RE: Lawrence TBD Urban Renewal Plan**

Dear Mayor Rivera and Ms. Harol:

The Department of Housing and Community Development (the Department) is in receipt of the City of Lawrence's urban renewal plan titled *Lawrence TBD* (Plan), received on March 9, 2017. The Plan focuses on downtown economic development in order to impact job creation and quality of life for residents and employees within the City.

Under the proposed Plan, the Lawrence Redevelopment Authority (LRA) looks to incentivize and accelerate development of large vacant parcels for light manufacturing, health care, education and mixed use development while protecting and preserving the City's historic buildings and infrastructure through adaptive re-use. To achieve these goals, the LRA will utilize design guidelines, rezoning, and infrastructure improvements to attract private partners. The urban renewal area encompasses 388 properties and approximately 364 acres. The Plan looks to acquire only tax-title properties and does not intend to pursue hostile takings or takings of occupied buildings. The Plan has a 20-year duration.

Pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 121B, § 48 the Department has reviewed the Urban Renewal Plan submission and makes the following findings:

- The project area would not by private enterprise alone and without either government subsidy or the exercise of governmental powers be made available for urban renewal.

- The proposed land uses and building requirements in the project area will afford maximum opportunity for privately financed urban renewal consistent with the sound needs of the City as a whole.
- The financial plan is sound.
- The project area qualifies as decadent.
- The Urban Renewal Plan is sufficiently complete.
- The LRA must request designation of a Relocation Advisory Agency and submit a Relocation Plan for approval to the Bureau of Relocation prior to the commencement of any relocation activities pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 79A and 760 CMR 27.00.

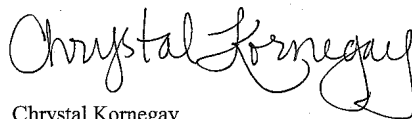
The Department concurs with the finding of the City's Planning Board that the Urban Renewal Plan is based upon a local survey and conforms to a comprehensive plan for the locality as a whole.

Please be advised that pursuant to 760 CMR 12.04 and the terms of the waiver dated April 4, 2017, "Land Acquisition," requires two recent, independent appraisals be submitted to the Department prior to any actual land acquisition.

The Department approves the Lawrence TBD Urban Renewal Plan. This approval is conditional upon the Lawrence Redevelopment Authority obtaining the necessary MEPA approvals, if any, in accordance with the Certificate of the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs on the Environmental Notification Form issued by MEPA on April 14, 2017.

On behalf of Governor Baker, the Department looks forward to working with the City of Lawrence and the Lawrence Redevelopment Authority in the future on the successful implementation of this urban renewal plan.

Sincerely,



Chrystal Kornegay  
Undersecretary

Congratulations!

# Acknowledgements

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Mayor Daniel Rivera

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## CITY PLANNING STAFF

Theresa Park, Planning Director  
Abel Vargas, Director of Business and Economic Development  
James Barnes, Community Development Director  
Daniel McCarthy, Land Use Planner  
Laiza St. Onge, Asset Manager

## PREPARED FOR THE LAWRENCE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Kristen Harol, Chairman  
Evan Silverio, Vice-Chairman  
Elias Rodriguez, Treasurer  
Michelle Melancon  
Jennelle Graziano  
James Patrick O'Donoghue (former member)  
Jimmy Miranda (former member)

Anne-Marie Doherty, Administrative Assistant  
Lawrence P. Mayo, P.C., Outside Legal Counsel

Maggie Super Church, Project Manager

## PREPARED BY

### **Harriman/The Cecil Group, Inc.**

Steven G. Cecil AIA ASLA  
Emily Keys Innes, AICP, LEED AP ND

### **FXM Associates, Inc.**

Francis X. Mahady  
Jacquelyn Hallsmith  
Dianne Tsitsos

### **Stantec**

Drew Leff  
Alexandra Phillips  
Maixuan Phan

### **Bonz & Associates**

Robert Salisbury

## Citizens Advisory Committee

Joshua Alba  
Nathan Baez  
Lynne Brown  
Spencer Buchholz  
Nancy Corrigan  
Katie Darwin  
Wilson G. de los Santos  
Jennifer Hilton  
Martha M. Leavitt  
Christopher Lynch  
April Lyskowsky  
Stephen P. Krumland  
Lesly Medina  
Jonathon Nix  
Alberto N. Núñez  
Yulissa Núñez  
Myra Ortiz  
Richard Padova  
Denise L. Perrault  
Dick Russell  
Elissa Salas  
Gary Sidell  
Mariel Silverio  
Jonas Stundza  
Kiriza Zihahirwa



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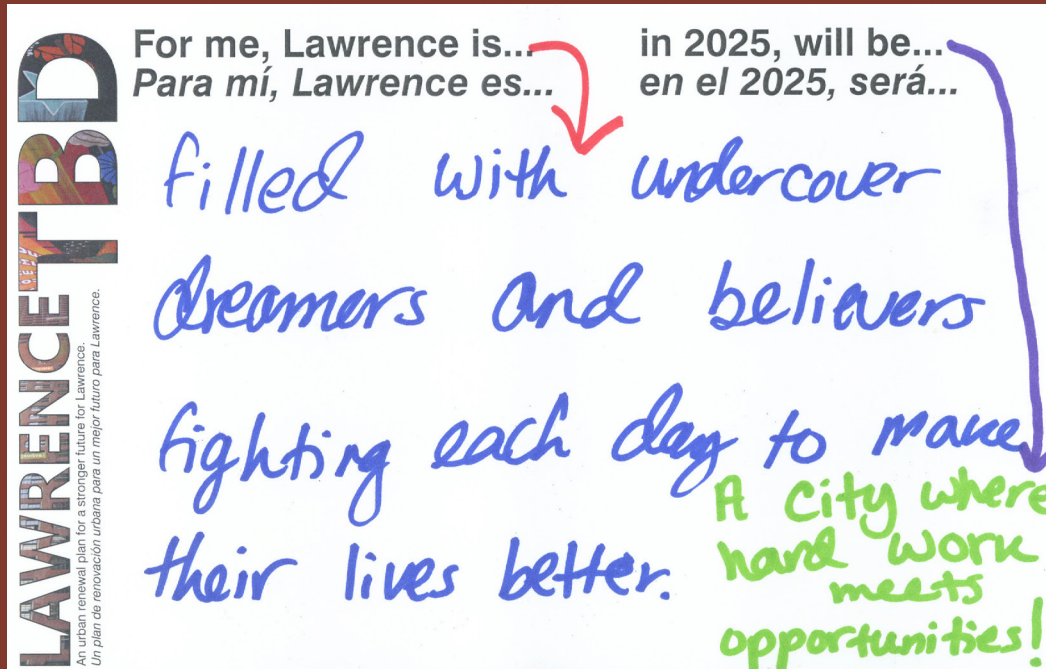
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- B** ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REAL ESTATE MARKET CONDITIONS AND TRENDS: FXM ASSOCIATES
- C** FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS FOR A LAWRENCE 40R OVERLAY DISTRICT AND 370 ESSEX STREET: STANTEC
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**LawrenceTBD**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



An urban renewal plan for a stronger future for Lawrence.  
Un plan de renovación urbana para un mejor futuro para Lawrence.

## LawrenceTBD: An Urban Renewal Plan for a New Century

The Lawrence Redevelopment Authority (LRA) started the process of creating this plan with a focus on economic development and how that focus could impact job creation and quality of life for residents and employees within Lawrence and fiscal stability for the City itself.

The vision and goals, strategies for action, and actions themselves support this original focus. The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) (25 residents who applied to join this process) and members of the public who attended one or more of the forums had significant input, and, in some cases, drove the development of the actions in this plan.

The green dotted line on the map of the urban renewal area to the right appears on every map in this document. This dotted line highlights the Amesbury Street corridor, which is a key connecting corridor that links the live/work/play/shop/learn area of Essex Street and the surrounding grid (red) to the live/work/play area of the mill district (yellow) to the work/play area of the Merrimack Street corridor (blue). The other two bridges, the Duck Bridge to the east and the Broadway Bridge to the west, are connectors that have already been upgraded (grey dashed lines), and serve as the connective boundaries of the area. The Amesbury Street corridor, with the Casey Bridge that links the two sides of the Merrimack River, connects the center of each of these three subareas. The majority of the physical interventions proposed in this area are related in some way to this corridor.

The process of developing the economic strategy for this plan began with a focus on defining those industries within the City and region that have the most impact in terms of projected job creation and growth. These industries are **Food Manufacturing and Production, Specialty Manufacturing, Healthcare, Education, and Arts and Culture**. These five industries already exist in some form; actions taken in this plan and additional support from the City will contribute to meeting the goals for job creation identified by the LRA. The five industries line up neatly with the subareas at right: Education and Arts and Culture support other destination uses along Essex Street; Healthcare is already found in the mill district and could be expanded with new construction along Merrimack Street; and the open land available along the Merrimack Street Corridor could support new construction for Food Production (old mill buildings are not suited to the food manufacturing process) or Specialty Manufacturing. However, all five industries should be prevalent, at different scales, throughout the urban renewal area.



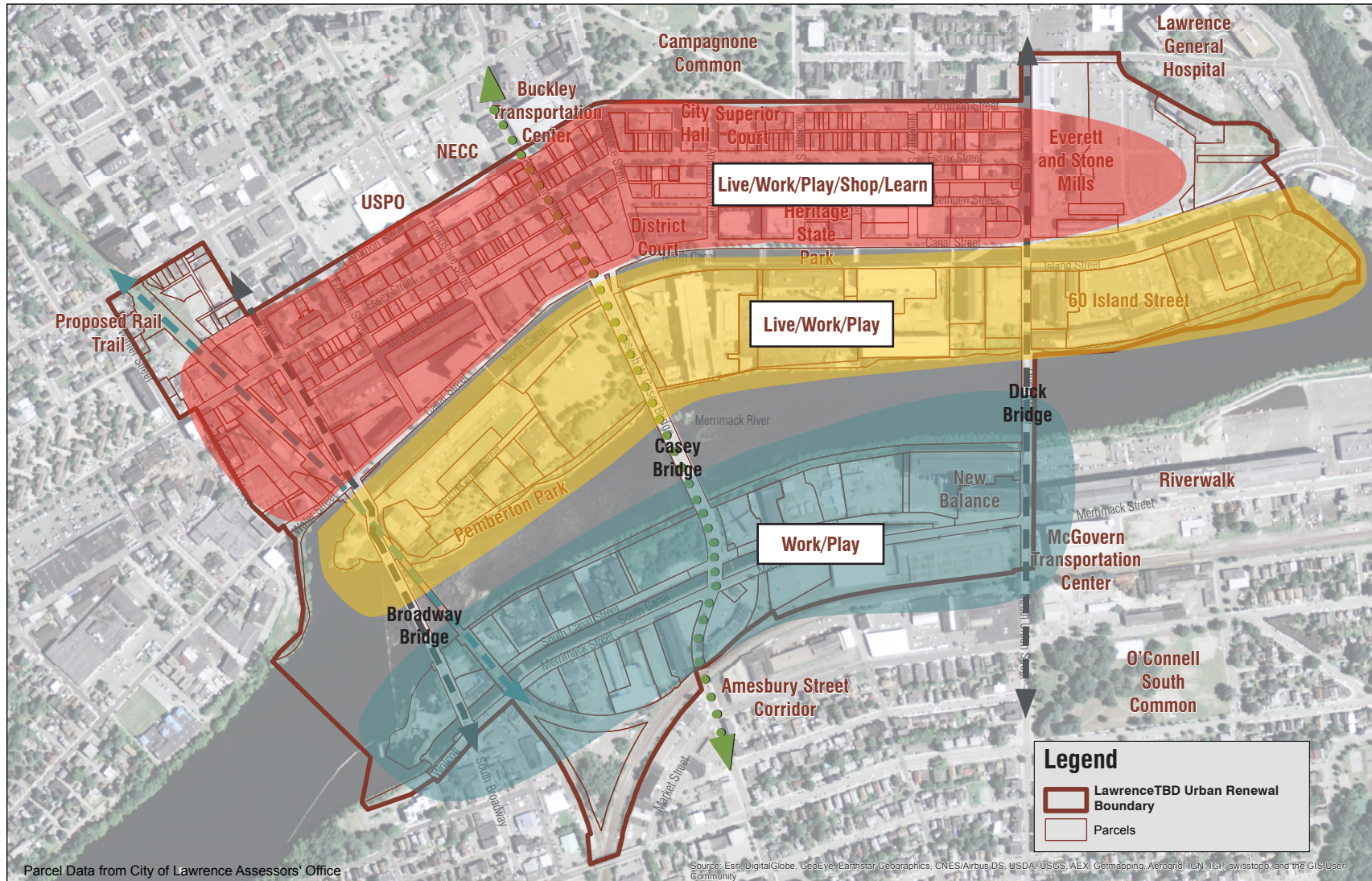


Figure E-1: Organization of Future Uses and Connections

## PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

This *Lawrence TBD Urban Renewal Plan* (the Urban Renewal Plan) is an urban renewal plan as defined and enabled by Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L.) Chapter 121B and has been prepared in accordance with 760 CMR 12.00 as required by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

The purpose of this Urban Renewal Plan is to identify the current conditions that prevent such private investment, determine the needs and goals of the smaller community of this area and the impact they expect for the larger community as a whole, and define those actions that will create incentives for the private market, over time, to address the existing conditions.

## REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The Lawrence Redevelopment Authority (the "LRA") is a public body politic and corporate duly organized in 1958 by the City of Lawrence and Commonwealth of Massachusetts,

and existing under Massachusetts General Laws c.121B, §1, et seq. The LRA possesses the powers of an "operating agency" under section 11 of M.G.L. c. 121B and additional powers as an "urban renewal agency" under sections 9, and 45 through 57 of the same chapter. The broad development capabilities of the LRA include the power to prepare "urban renewal plans", and engage in "urban renewal projects" and other projects, the power to buy and sell property, the power to acquire property through eminent domain, and the power to designate projects under M.G.L. c. 121A. Under M.G.L. c. 121B and c. 30B, the sale, lease, or acquisition of residential, industrial, or commercial real property by a redevelopment authority engaged in the development and disposition of real estate in accordance with an approved plan, is exempt from public disposition procedures required of all other local government bodies.

## EMINENT DOMAIN

Under M.G.L. 121B, an urban renewal plan allows a redevelopment authority to use the eminent domain process to acquire real property to fulfill the public purposes of an urban renewal plan. **This Urban Renewal Plan does not anticipate the use of eminent domain to achieve the implementation plan summarized in this *Executive Summary* and detailed in *Section 3 Objectives*. The LRA does not intend to pursue hostile takings or takings of occupied buildings at this time. Any future use of eminent domain would require a major plan update to this Urban Renewal Plan.** A major plan update requires a public hearing by the City Council, submission of the update and supporting information to DHCD, and approval by DHCD before acquisition by eminent domain could take place.



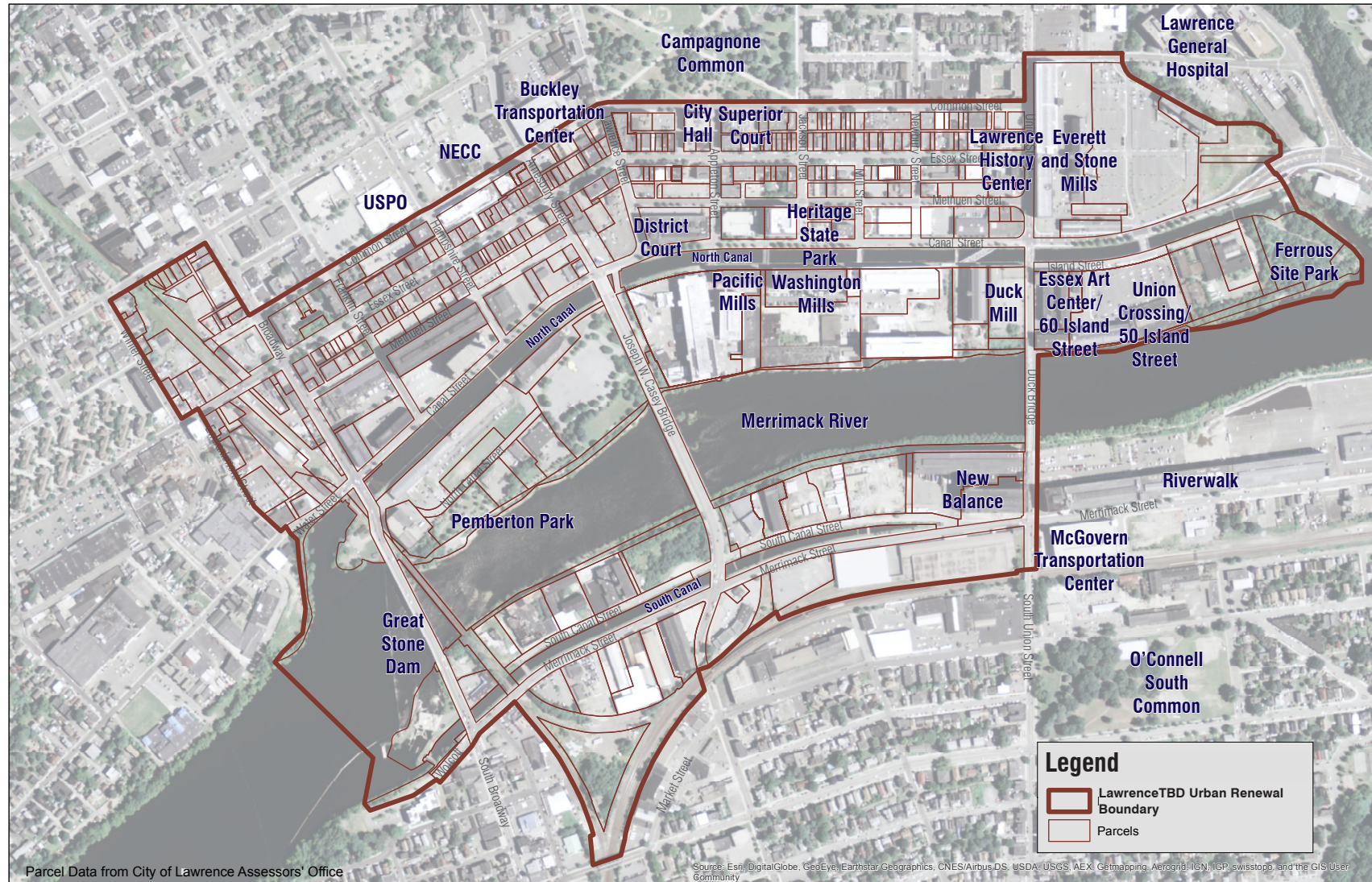


Figure E-1A: The LawrenceTBD Urban Renewal Area

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## E.1 Public Process

### LawrenceTBD:

- Lawrence...To Be Determined?
- Lawrence...To Be Decided?
- Lawrence...To Be Developed?

The name of this plan is deliberately ambiguous to allow the people of Lawrence to determine what their own future can and should be. The dividers for each section display cards that participants completed during the public process expressing their view of the City now and their hopes for the future.

Lawrence is a city of opportunity that has not been able to fully realize those opportunities for either its residents or for the City itself. The Lawrence Redevelopment Authority (LRA) recognized this and began this effort with a simple set of goals for the process and the resulting urban renewal plan. The LRA established these goals as an initial charge to their project man-

ager, Maggie Super Church, and the consultant team, led by The Cecil Group, and including FXM Associates and Stantec. The initial goals are as follows:

*The Plan will identify action steps that the LRA and other public and private partners can take to advance four key goals:*

- *Economic development*
- *Job creation*
- *Improved quality of life*
- *Fiscal stability*

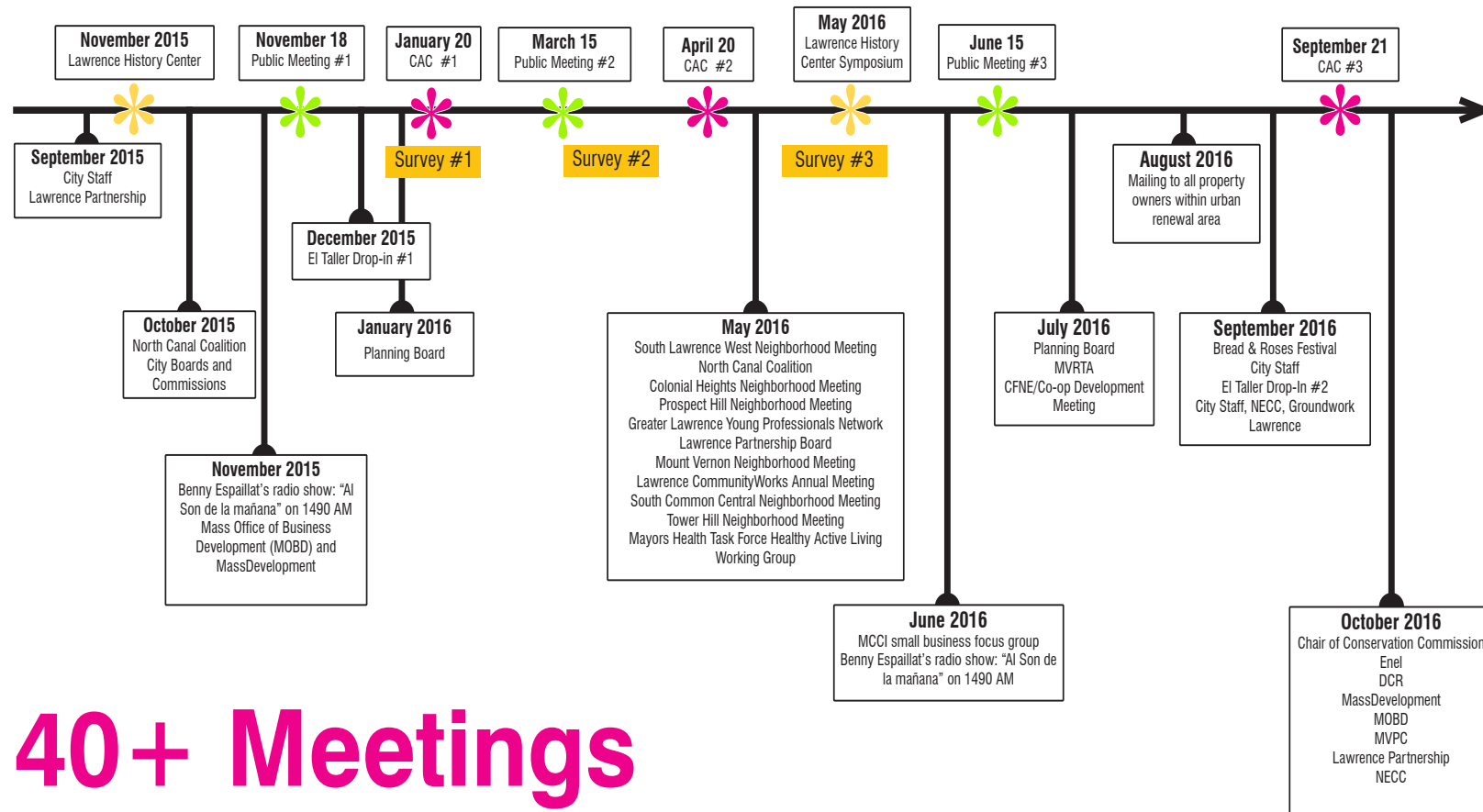
As a redevelopment authority under Massachusetts state law, the LRA has the ability to develop land and undertake physical improvements to address existing conditions within an urban renewal area that cannot be addressed by the private market alone. The focus of this process has been to:

- Identify those physical conditions that have limited the economic growth of the City
- Identify those physical conditions that have affected the quality of life for residents

- Define the actions the LRA can take that will address those physical conditions
- Evaluate other actions that will support the overall goals of the LRA and suggest partners, such as local community groups, City and State agencies, and local nonprofit organizations, that can undertake those supporting actions

The focus of this research has included the identification of those aspects of the economy that could be enhanced and supported by the efforts of the LRA both on its own, or in partnership with other organizations and City bodies.

An extensive public process, which included a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) of 25 members, formal workshops, open houses, and outreach to community groups and nonprofit organizations led to the development of a vision statement that guided the recommended strategies and actions detailed in this plan. The CAC met regularly to discuss the results from research and public meetings. The input from those members was critical to the development of this plan.



**40+ Meetings**  
**400+ People\***  
 \*not counting radio or social media

The input from participants was clear – people love Lawrence – its diversity of cultures, its promise, its history, buildings, and outdoor spaces. The planning effort has been an attempt to capture these positive feelings and translate them into actions that support a physical and economic environment that matches the passion of the community.

Figure E-2: Public Process as of October 2016



## E.2 Existing Conditions

As part of the technical analysis that supports the recommendations of this Urban Renewal Plan, the consultant team investigated three main areas:

- The physical conditions of the proposed urban renewal area
- The current regulatory context of the area
- The economic and market conditions for the area, the City and Essex County

The consultant team also reviewed previous plans and studies that are relevant to the urban renewal area.

*Section 1 Characteristics* and *Section 2 Eligibility* provide the details that support this summary; additional technical reports are contained within the Appendices.

## SITE ANALYSIS

EXISTING CONDITION	KEY IDEA
Current land use is a mix of commercial, retail, office, residential, and industrial.	Strong mix of uses creates opportunities for an “18-hour city” - a city in which people live, work, and spend money on goods, services, and experiences within the same district.
Most lots have at least one building.	Most investment is likely to be adaptive reuse or rehabilitation.
The pace of building slowed significantly after the 1950’s.	Buildings are older, with floor plans that are not always consistent with current needs.
A significant number of parcels have frontage on the river and/or the two canals.	Waterfront parcels are a significant asset, but past and projected future floods present challenges for those parcels.
The City, Essex County, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have a significant presence in the Study Area.	City Hall and the Courts act as anchors for Essex Street and Canal Street.
The area contains brownfields related to previous industrial uses.	Because of its ability to borrow money and manage grants, the LRA may be able to address brownfield conditions that the private market cannot.
Significant portions of the area are of historic importance.	Only Local Historic Districts offer protection. Historic fabric is an economic asset that draws people and businesses. National Register Districts provide property owners with the opportunity to use federal and state historic tax credits for rehabilitation and redevelopment.
A number of properties have tax liens.	Properties with significant tax liens (in terms of amount and length of time) may offer opportunities for redevelopment.

## REGULATORY ANALYSIS

EXISTING CONDITION	KEY IDEA
Different zoning districts have different permissions and restrictions that may promote or discourage change.	<p>The current zoning districts within the area are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main Business District (B-3)</li> <li>• General Industrial Park District (I-2)</li> <li>• Reviviendo Gateway District Overlay (RGO)</li> </ul>
Housing is allowed within these districts, but not as-of-right (with one exception).	A Special Permit is required for Residential Multi-family or Planned Unit Developments. Artists live/work units are allowed as-of-right within the RGO. Residential uses are allowed as-of-right when mixed with commercial or office uses, and are subject to other conditions.
Existing regulations do not address the current conditions within the Urban Renewal Area.	Proposed zoning must consider housing needs, protect for historic buildings, and provide incentives for development or redevelopment that are tied to community goals.
The area is part of a Commonwealth of Massachusetts Growth District Initiative.	The State recognizes this as a growth area and is prepared to support that growth by working directly with the City to evaluate and, if necessary, modify regulations or processes to support redevelopment.
Earlier planning projects have provided recommendations for smaller subareas of our Study Area.	<p>Some of these recommendations could be implemented by the LRA; others are the responsibility of other entities. The recent plans relevant to this Urban Renewal Plan are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>City of Lawrence Comprehensive Housing Study</i>, August 2015 (Karen Sunnarborg Consulting, Charleen Regan Consulting, Abacus Architects + Planners)</li> <li>• <i>Lawrence Downtown West Planning Study</i>, August 2015 (City of Lawrence, MassDevelopment, Utile)</li> <li>• <i>Merrimack Street Land Use Planning Study</i>, 2016 (City of Lawrence, McCabe Consulting)</li> </ul>

## ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REAL ESTATE MARKET CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

The consultant team undertook three separate analyses related to market conditions and trends:

- Historical employment trends by major sector using data from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and US Department of Labor and US Department of Commerce
- Job and payroll shift share analyses and assessment of labor force occupations for target industries that were suggested by the client
- Real estate market conditions and trends using CoStar Property Information Systems data

The full report (with a complete discussion of the tables and methodology) is provided in *Appendix B: Economic Development and Real Estate Market Conditions and Trends*. As part of the research for this report, the consultant team conducted many interviews that provide local data beyond that collected by the sources

above. The interviews suggested that additional research on the supply chains of businesses, sub-contractors, and employment requirements for the food industry, health care, education, and specialty manufacturing (textile, precision equipment) would be appropriate given the current trends in those industries within the City and region. The consultant team reported that the “enthusiasm and knowledge revealed in the limited number of interviews conducted is extraordinary and bodes well for advancing an economic development agenda for the LRA and City” (page 3 of the report).

### Analysis of Employment Trends

As shown in Table 1, historical trends suggest certain major industries will have employment growth within the City and within Essex County. These industries are based on the 2-digit NAICS codes. The industries with the highest growth trends include the following:

- Within the City of Lawrence
  - Health Care and Social Assistance
  - Accommodations and Food Services
  - Food Manufacturing
- Within Essex County
  - Professional and Technical Services
  - Arts, Entertainment and Recreation
  - Educational Services
  - Medical Devices

Projected employment growth suggests increased demand for real estate space that could represent development opportunities for underutilized buildings or lots, as shown in Table 2. The City of Lawrence will need to capture a greater share of the projected County-wide growth than the other communities within Essex County to take advantage of this demand.

Table 1

Selected Growth Sectors in City of Lawrence and Essex County Based on 2004-2014 Trend Forecasts				
Industry	Jobs in 2014	Projected Jobs in 2020	Projected Increase 2014-2020	Projected % Increase 2014-2020
Food Manufacturing-City	737	924	187	25%
Medical Devices -County	5,486	5,968	482	9%
Finance and Insurance-City	241	278	37	15%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing-City	237	247	10	4%
Professional & Technical Services-County	33,112	34,295	1,183	4%
Management of Companies & Enterprises -County	5,039	5,366	327	6%
Educational Services -County	30,039	30,652	613	2%
Health Care & Social Assistance -City	9,787	11,564	1,777	18%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation-County	11,720	12,743	1,023	9%
Accommodation & Food Services-City	1,147	1,337	190	17%
Other Services, ex. Public Admin-City	1,184	1,724	540	46%

Source: MA Dept of Labor ES202 Data Series; US Dept of Commerce, Regional Economic Information System; and FXM Associates

Table 2

Projected Space Demand through 2020 Based on Trend Projected Jobs				
	Essex County		City of Lawrence	
	Jobs	Space Demand (SF)	Jobs	Space Demand (SF)
Food Manufacturing	1,140	570,000	187	93,500
Office Using Jobs	2,840	852,000	0	
Health Care & Social Assistance	9,994	3,997,600	1,777	710,800
Accommodations & Food Services	2,087	2,087,000	190	190,000
Educational Services	613	613,000	0	
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	1,023	409,200	0	
Other Services	2,293	1,146,500	540	270,000

### WHAT IS A NAICS CODE?

The analysis in Appendix B: Economic Development and Real Estate Market Conditions and Trends refers to NAICS codes, or North American Industry Classification System. These codes identify industries by two-digit or four-digit codes. The two-digit codes are more general classifications; the four-digit codes represent subcategories of the two-digit codes.

These codes were developed by the Federal government for use in collecting and publishing data related to businesses in the United States. These codes are the standard for Federal agencies. More information about the codes is at <http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/>.

## Shift Share Analysis

Shift share analysis compares local growth to that predicted by national industry trends. Where local industries add more jobs than would be predicted by national trends for the same industry, the local area has demonstrated a competitive advantage in that industry.

The analysis revealed that certain industries have a significant competitive advantage in Essex County (those above 1.00 in the Regional Job Growth Index are particularly strong). The top five industries, as shown in Table 3, are as follows:

- Textile product mills
- Apparel manufacturing

- Greenhouse and nursery production
- Leather and allied product manufacturing
- Breweries
- Fruit and vegetable preserving and specialty

These industries exceeded growth predicted by national trends between 2009-2014 and therefore have a competitive local advantage.

Table 3

### Summary Employment and Wage Shift Share Analysis for Essex County

Industry Code	Industry Title	Actual Job Growth 2009-2014		Regional Job Growth Index 2009-2014		Ave Annual Wages in 2014		Regional Wage Growth Index 2009-2014	
		2014 Jobs	2014	2009-2014	2014	2014	2014	2009-2014	2014
10	Total Covered	313,446	22,796			\$	53,864		
1114	Greenhouse and nursery production	151	40	1.12	\$	24,611	0.71		
3114	Fruit and vegetable preserving and specialty	609	609	1.00	\$	44,004	1.00		
3118	Bakeries and tortilla manufacturing	1,995	528	0.83	\$	36,861	0.66		
312120	Breweries	84	84	1.00	\$	27,330	1.00		
314	Textile product mills	166	24	1.55	\$	36,726	0.71		
315	Apparel manufacturing	533	187	1.31	\$	31,752	1.14		
316	Leather and allied product manufacturing	908	120	1.12	\$	77,785	0.82		
3391	Medical equipment and supplies manufacturing	1,768	186	0.98	\$	90,717	0.49		
4244	Grocery and related product wholesalers	1,491	104	0.58	\$	66,325	0.36		
512	Motion picture and sound recording industries	946	383	0.90	\$	13,291	0.49		
54192	Photographic services	161	5	8.15	\$	29,222	7.52		
6112-6117	Educational services (except elementary and secondary schools)	3,431	515	0.47	\$	42,780	0.25		
621	Ambulatory health care services	22,882	4,361	0.39	\$	57,797	0.27		
622	Hospitals	12,522	806	0.61	\$	56,169	0.04		
7111	Performing arts companies	177	80	0.95	\$	22,695	0.92		
7223	Special food services	1,631	362	0.34	\$	26,735	0.19		

Source: US and MA Departments of Labor ES202 data series and FXM Associates

## Labor Force/Occupational Analysis

There are significant opportunities expected for Lawrence residents with the requisite skills especially in Healthcare Support and Food Preparation and Serving Related (see the Total Employment by Occupation in the City in 2014 and within Essex County, projected for 2020 in Table 4). Both of these industries were identified as opportunities for further growth within Lawrence. Additional training in these areas would increase opportunities for residents who do not have the necessary skills; local nonprofit organizations or educational institutions might



consider sponsoring specific programs for these industries.

The Health Care and Social Assistance Sector was the leading growth industry in Lawrence; this trend is projected to continue through 2020. The average annual wage for this industry is \$57,000, which is higher than the median household income within the City. In 2013, the median household income was \$32,851.\*

Food Production and Distribution is a growing industry that can operate at different scales, including the following:

- Commercial storage/kitchen to support local restaurants
- Food industry incubators
- Specialty label food processing, production and distribution
- Cooperative buying programs, warehouse storage, and distribution for bodegas throughout the City

\* MAPC <http://www.housing.ma/lawrence/report>, last accessed October 13, 2016

Table 4

### Projected Occupation Needs Compared to Current Occupations of Lawrence Residents

Description		City of Lawrence		Essex County Future	
Total Employment by Occupation		Total (2014)*		Occupation Needs (2020)*	
SOC Code	Occupations Description	Absolute	%	Absolute	%
<b>Total Employment by Occupation</b>		<b>49,394</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>20,422</b>	<b>100.00</b>
11	Management	4,269	8.64	922	4.52
13	Business and Financial Operations	2,527	5.12	569	2.78
15	Computer and Mathematical	1,948	3.94	257	1.26
17	Architecture and Engineering	699	1.42	52	0.26
19	Life, Physical, and Social Science	398	0.81	223	1.09
21	Community and Social Services	1,322	2.68	887	4.34
23	Legal	197	0.40	6	0.03
25	Education, Training, and Library	3,452	6.99	2,500	12.24
27	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	783	1.59	373	1.83
29	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	3,524	7.13	2,312	11.32
31	Healthcare Support	752	1.52	4,085	20.00
33	Protective Service	1,603	3.25	129	0.63
35	Food Preparation and Serving Related	1,072	2.17	1,411	6.91
37	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	2,843	5.76	842	4.12
39	Personal Care and Service	2,194	4.44	1,897	9.29
41	Sales and Related	3,696	7.48	254	1.24
43	Office and Administrative Support	6,076	12.30	1,782	8.73
45	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	84	0.17	51	0.25
47	Construction and Extraction	3,370	6.82	45	0.22
49	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	1,841	3.73	385	1.88
51	Production	1,405	2.84	1,050	5.14
53	Transportation and Material Moving	2,826	5.72	359	1.76
99	Unclassified	2,513	5.09	30	0.15

\*Prepared from Nielsen Business-Facts, this includes data from InfoGroup and Federal Standard Occupancy Classifications.

Prepared For: CGI Prepared By: FXM - dt

+ Prepared from US BLS QCEW data on growth 2009-2014 by industry for a set of targeted industries and the US BLS Industry-Occupation Matrix (2014) by Michael L. Lahr Regional Economic Consulting.

Other industries with significant needs by 2020 include Education, Training, and Library; Personal Care and Service; and Office and Administrative Support.

## Analysis of Real Estate Market Conditions and Trends

The analysis examined historical and forecast trends in the inventory, occupancy, vacancy rates, and lease rates for the major types of real estate space: office, industrial/wholesale, flex,

and retail. The geographic area of the analysis covered the City of Lawrence and an industry-defined submarket that includes Lawrence, Andover, North Andover, Methuen, and Haverhill. The results are provided in Table 5.

There has been little growth in the net inventory and occupancy of each type of space and little net new absorption forecast over the next few years. However, this does not mean that well located, designed and strategically priced development cannot succeed since (as noted previously) there will be growth in demand within certain industries. Rents in Lawrence are lower than in the overall submarket, and projected net absorption of office and industrial space is favorable.

## Retail Opportunity/Gap Analysis

A retail opportunity/gap analysis compares current demand by residents within a defined geographic area to actual store sales within that same area. Where demand exceeds current supply, opportunities exist for expansion or new stores since most people will shop for what they need as close to home as possible. The opportunity/gap analysis is independent of regional

Table 5

Real Estate Market Conditions Summary			
Space Type and Geography	Vacant SF	Gross Rent per SF per Year	Forecast Ave Ann NET Absorption (SF)
	(1stQ 2016)	(1stQ 2016)	(2016-2018)
OFFICE			
Submarket	2,200,000	\$ 16.14	7,800
City of Lawrence	678,000	\$ 15.21	4,200
INDUSTRIAL			
Submarket	1,420,000	\$ 4.81	(58,000)
City of Lawrence	685,000	\$ 4.42	5,500
FLEX			
Submarket	1,546,000	\$ 8.96	(57,000)
City of Lawrence	303,000	\$ 7.81	(22,000)
RETAIL			
Submarket	321,000	\$ 16.37	(19,000)
City of Lawrence	116,000	\$ 12.90	(6,500)

Source: CoStar Property Information Systems, April 2016; and FXM Associates

market trends as retailers are constantly creating or abandoning store locations.

This analysis identifies a number of gaps that could be filled by attracting successful retailers from elsewhere in the region to either move to Lawrence or open a second location within the City. Local entrepreneurs can also use this information to make decisions about possible product lines.

This analysis identifies opportunities for Essex Street in particular. Table 6 identifies the store type, the estimated amount of demand for space (Potentially Capturable SF), and the projected number of stores that could be supported by the community.

According to this analysis, the Essex Street area could support two new full-service restaurants. Other significant opportunities include furniture stores (up to three new stores), and clothing stores (up to two women's and three family stores).

This analysis is often used by retailers looking for new locations; it is equally effective as a marketing tool for cities looking to attract goods and services that are missing from their downtowns.

Table 6

**Potential Retail Opportunities in the Lawrence Urban Renewal Area\*\***

Retail Stores	Market Area Gap	Supportable SF	Potentially Captured SF	Potentially Supportable Stores
Furniture Stores-4421	\$ 23,731,837	71,267	14,748	3
Home Furnishing Stores-4422	\$ 6,115,576	18,365	4,130	1
Computer & Software Stores-44312	\$ 5,380,118	14,049	3,000	2
Hardware Stores-44413	\$ 18,317,228	89,200	13,200	1
Cosmetics, Beauty Supplies, Perfume Stores-44612	\$ 5,218,623	12,396	3,054	2
Optical Goods Stores-44613	\$ 5,909,289	17,512	1,925	1
Other Health & Personal Care Stores-44619	\$ 6,567,363	22,327	3,614	2
Women's Clothing Stores-44812	\$ 13,839,582	36,831	6,000	2
Family Clothing Stores-44814	\$ 16,736,789	55,879	9,000	3
Luggage & Leather Goods Stores-44832	\$ 8,549,164	27,443	2,500	1
Sporting Goods Stores-45111	\$ 16,350,439	58,394	6,008	1
Hobby, Toy & Game Stores-45112	\$ 7,480,470	32,954	3,400	1
Musical Instrument & Supplies Stores-45114	\$ 4,423,254	17,483	3,000	1
Full-Service Restaurants-7221	\$ 22,736,591	64,410	10,248	2
	<b>\$ 161,356,323</b>	<b>538,509</b>	<b>83,827</b>	<b>23</b>

Sources: The Nielsen Company *Site Reports*, 2015 data; industry publication estimates; and FXM Associates

**\*\*Based on analysis of consumer expenditures and actual store sales within a retail market area defined by 5, 10, and 15 minute drive times (see text)**

Retail needs shift over time, and this analysis is a snapshot of current conditions rather than a predictor of future trends. However, even as a snapshot, it is a useful tool for further exploration of possibilities for the revitalization of Essex Street.

## E.3 Implementation Plan

The vision for this Urban Renewal Plan builds upon the initial goals of the LRA with research into current physical and economic conditions; feedback from participants in the public meetings; online and physical surveys; and input from meetings of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC).

The four goals (see box at right) that support this vision have guided the LRA as they evaluated strategies (see facing page) and related actions that would serve as the implementation section of this Urban Renewal Plan. The actions are divided into four groups and summarized on the following eight pages:

- A. Property Acquisition, Permitting, and Development Actions
- B. Regulatory Framework and Incentives
- C. Financial and Technical Assistance for Property Owners
- D. Transportation and Infrastructure Improvements

*Section 3 Plan Objectives* contains detailed explanations of the actions and the proposed impact of each action on the urban renewal area.

## Vision and Goals

*The vision and goals were developed during the public process, with input from members of the community and the Citizens Advisory Committee.*

### VISION

Create a thriving local economy in which residents have access to new employment opportunities and higher-paying jobs, enabling them to afford better housing and more goods and services within the city. To accomplish this, the LRA will develop an Urban Renewal Plan that:

FIRST: draws from and encourages the talent in terms of labor and local businesses that exists within Lawrence today;

SECOND: builds on Lawrence's physical assets, including its historic buildings, rivers and canals, infrastructure, and transportation;

THIRD: projects a positive image for the City of Lawrence, encouraging both residents and visitors to support local businesses and cultural institutions;

FOURTH: attracts regional employers to locate or expand in Lawrence.

### VISIÓN

Crear una economía próspera en la cual residentes tienen acceso a nuevas oportunidades de empleo y mayor compensación salarial. Esto les permitirá el poder adquirir una mejor vivienda y cubrir sus gastos necesarios en la ciudad. Para lograr esto, el LRA desarrollará un Plan de Renovación Urbana que cumplirá lo siguiente:

PRIMERO: Fortalecer y fomentar el talento laboral y el comercio local que ya existen hoy en día en Lawrence.

SEGUNDO: Fortalecer los bienes físicos que tiene Lawrence, incluyendo edificios históricos, ríos y canales, infraestructura y transporte.

TERCERO: Promover una imagen positiva de Lawrence. Promover aquellos que vivan o visiten Lawrence a apoyar el comercio local e instituciones culturales locales.

CUARTO: Atraer empresas regionales a Lawrence para que trasladen sus oficinas o negocios a la ciudad.

## Strategies

*These strategies support the vision and goals and determine the categories of actions the LRA and their partners will undertake to implement this plan. The strategies listed below are in order from the highest-ranked to the lowest based on a public survey during the study process.*

#	STRATEGIES	% OF FAVORABLE RESPONSES
1	Create a more attractive environment for walking and biking and improve public safety throughout the urban renewal area.	96%
2	Incentivize/accelerate development of large vacant parcels for light manufacturing, health care, education, and mixed-use development.	95%
3	Bolster the City's arts, cultural and recreational assets and attract more visitors to Lawrence.	94%
4	Preserve, protect and enhance the City's historic buildings and infrastructure through adaptive re-use.	93%
5	Support the expansion of small businesses that generate jobs and build local wealth.	92%
6	Activate Essex Street through new and expanded retail, cafes, restaurants, galleries, and upper-floor residential uses.	90%
7	Encourage sustainable development through renewable energy production, energy efficiency, and Low-Impact Development.	89%
8	Create linkage mechanisms that capture the value of new development for citywide quality of life improvements.	87%

## A Property Acquisition, Permitting, and Development Actions

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	PARTNERS	PHASING	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
3,5,8	Explore the creation of a catalyst project on Essex Street. Potential ground floor uses include arts or food-related uses.	Lawrence Partnership, local colleges/universities	Phase 1 (3-5 years)	New Market and Historic Tax Credits, MassHousing Workforce Housing Fund, Commonwealth of MA Food Trust, private sources
2,4	Acquire vacant tax-title properties and coordinate permitting and site preparation for new development. <i>See Figure 1-9A and 1-9B.</i>	City of Lawrence	Phase 1 (3-5 years)	LRA, CDBG
1,2,4	Acquire parcels needed to support public infrastructure improvements.	City of Lawrence	Phase 1 (3-5 years)	MassWorks, TIGER, CDBG
2,4	Transfer ownership of relevant City-owned parcels to the LRA. <i>See Figure 1-9A and 1-9B.</i>	City of Lawrence	Phase 1 (3-5 years)	LRA
2,4	Coordinate permitting and site preparation for new development.	City of Lawrence, designated developers	Phase 1 (3-5 years)	Federal and State Brownfields grants, Mill Cities Community Investments
2,3,5,6	Create a permanent concert venue/stage at Pemberton Park and tie to local tourism efforts.	City of Lawrence, MA Department of Conservation and Recreation, Groundwork Lawrence	Phase 2 (5-10 years)	Private contributions (foundation/corporate), DCR Partnership Matching Funds Program, CDBG
2,3,5,6,8	Develop one or more structured parking facilities to support downtown and mill development.	City of Lawrence	Phase 3 (10-20 years)	LRA, EDA grants
4,5,7	Redevelop site on Merrimack Street for food-related or other light industrial uses; this could include the Merrimack Paper site.	City of Lawrence, EPA	Phase 3 (10-20 years)	EPA, EDA, MassDevelopment Brownfields Program, New Market Tax Credits, Massachusetts Food Trust

### Why are these actions important to this plan?

The actions in this category create physical changes throughout the urban renewal area. These changes support the visions, goals, and strategies by creating incentives for private investment in buildings. Catalyst projects provide a model for private developers; pre-permitted lots assist in the development process; and public infrastructure improvements create a more attractive environment for existing and future residents, business owners, and employees. The City has liens on a number of parcels whose owners owe significant property taxes over a long period of time. The City has a process whereby it can take those parcels to satisfy the outstanding property tax debt. The LRA may then acquire those parcels and either develop them itself, take them through the permitting process and then dispose of them, or dispose of them immediately. Making Pemberton Park a more active space was a widely-supported option during the public process.



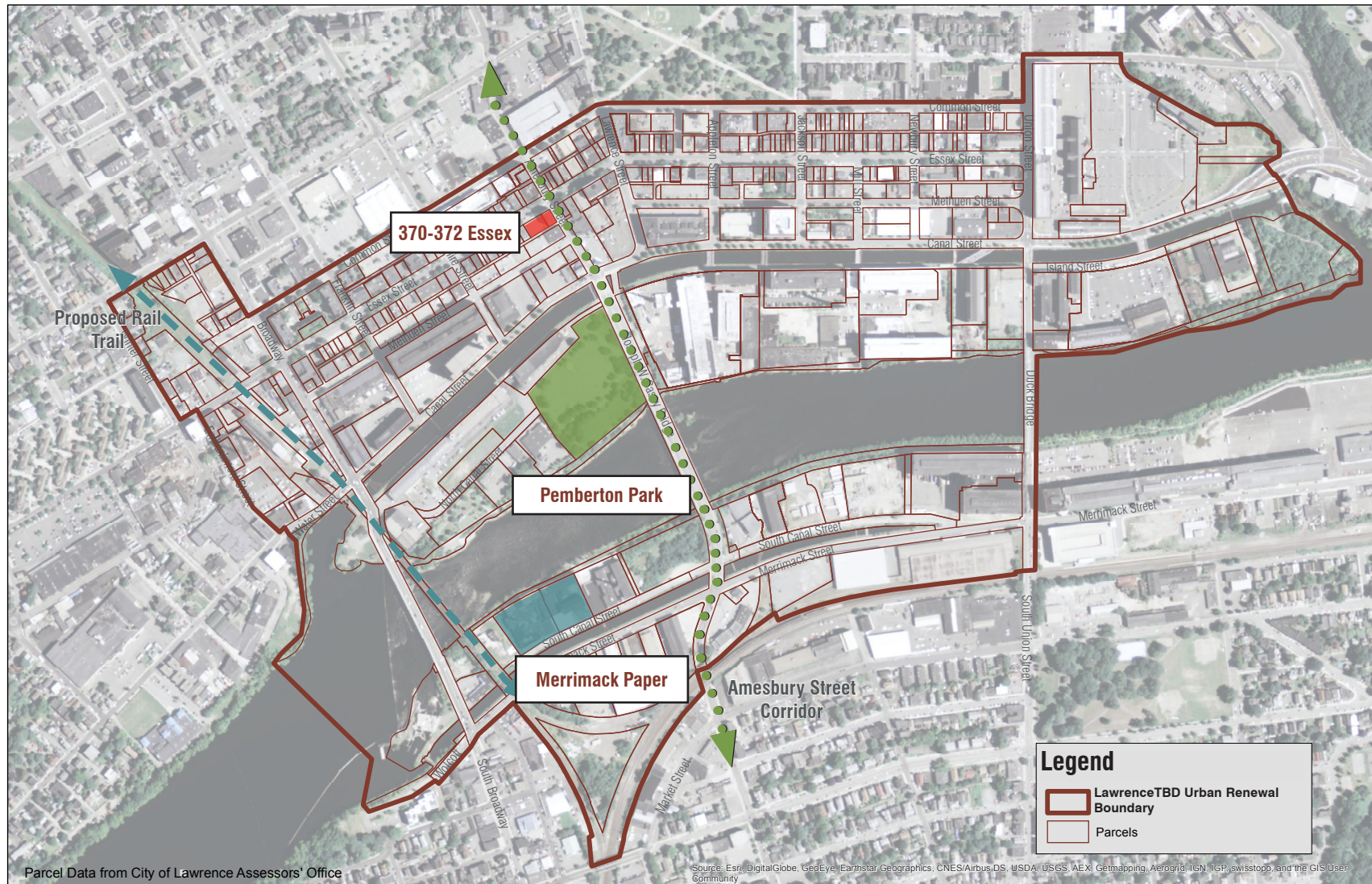


Figure E-3: Potential Development along Amesbury Street Corridor

## B Regulatory Framework and Incentives

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	PARTNERS	PHASING	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
2,3,5,6,7	Create design guidelines for urban renewal district to protect historic properties and ensure high-quality development.	Lawrence Planning Board and Historic Commission	In process	City of Lawrence
1,3,8	Convert RGO zoning to a Downtown Smart Growth Overlay District (DSGO) under M.G.L. 40R and expand to include central/west islands and downtown west to Broadway; explore potential to use 40R payments for homeownership assistance programs.	City of Lawrence, Lawrence Planning Board	In process	
2,5,7	Create a Planned industrial Development District along the Merrimack Street Corridor to support businesses related to manufacturing and healthcare.	City of Lawrence, Lawrence Planning Board	In process	
4	Designate a site along the Merrimack Corridor for 43D Expedited Permitting to encourage food manufacturing uses.	City of Lawrence, Commonwealth of MA	Phase 1 (3-5 years)	
1,7	Link existing landscape ordinance to create a mitigation fund for tree planting throughout the City in connection with the City's recently enacted Complete Streets policy.	City of Lawrence, Lawrence Planning Board	Phase 1 (3-5 years)	

### Why are these actions important to this plan?

Actions in this category change the regulatory environment in which development takes place. Zoning changes, such as the proposed Downtown Smart Growth Overlay District and the proposed Planned Industrial Development District, give additional flexibility to developers in terms of use and density while providing benefits to the community in terms of control over design and additional affordable housing, and the creation of incentives to encourage preferred industries and businesses.

State programs, such as the 43D Expedited Permitting program or the 40R Smart Growth program, provide tools to municipalities that allow them to prioritize areas for development according to community goals.

Linking development within the urban renewal area to mitigation efforts outside the area allows development within the urban renewal area to benefit the City as a whole. One example is the proposed change to the City's Landscape Ordinance that will create a mechanism for developers to pay into a Tree Trust that will help plant trees throughout the City.



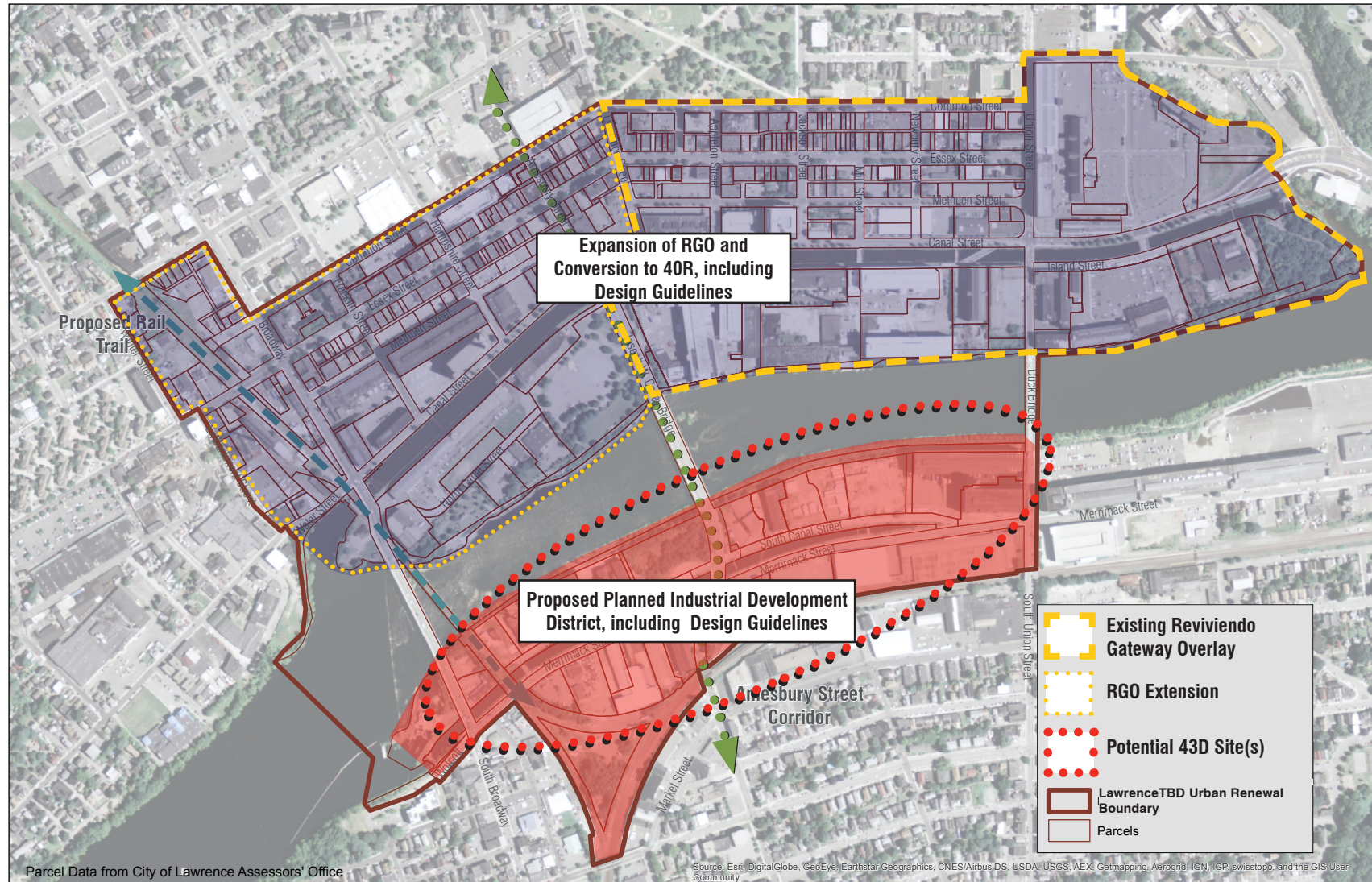


Figure E-4: Areas affected by recommended regulatory strategies within the urban renewal area

## C Financial and Technical Assistance for Property Owners

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	PARTNERS	PHASING	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
3,5,6,8	Commission historic district study and prepare National Historic District application for Essex Street.	Lawrence Historical Commission, Prospect Hill Historic District Commission, ArtsLawrence	Phase 1 (3-5 years)	City of Lawrence, Mass Cultural Council, Massachusetts Historic Commission, Preservation Mass, MassDevelopment, private sources
3,5,8	Prepare bilingual guide to zoning, design guidelines and permitting requirements in the Urban Renewal District.	City of Lawrence, Lawrence Partnership, NECC	Phase 1 (3-5 years)	City of Lawrence, private sources
3,5,8	Establish a process for convening a one-stop pre-permitting meeting with City Boards/ Commissions and Department Heads to review larger projects proposed in the District and provide feedback to project proponents.	City of Lawrence Staff, Boards, and Commissions	Phase 1 (3-5 years)	City of Lawrence

### Why are these actions important to this plan?

The goals of this plan emphasize job creation and economic development – especially strengthening local businesses. Actions under this category allow the LRA to take action under its authority to promote assistance for small businesses and local property owners who wish to invest in their buildings but need assistance, whether technical, financial, or both.

The historic character of Essex Street and the mills is important for many reasons: as visual reminder of the community’s shared past, as a contributing factor to the sense of place that defines great spaces, and as an economic asset that has value to, among others, the film industry and tourism. Recent filming in Lawrence includes movies directed by Ben Affleck (“Live by Night” in 2015) and Kathryn Bigelow (untitled movie in 2016).



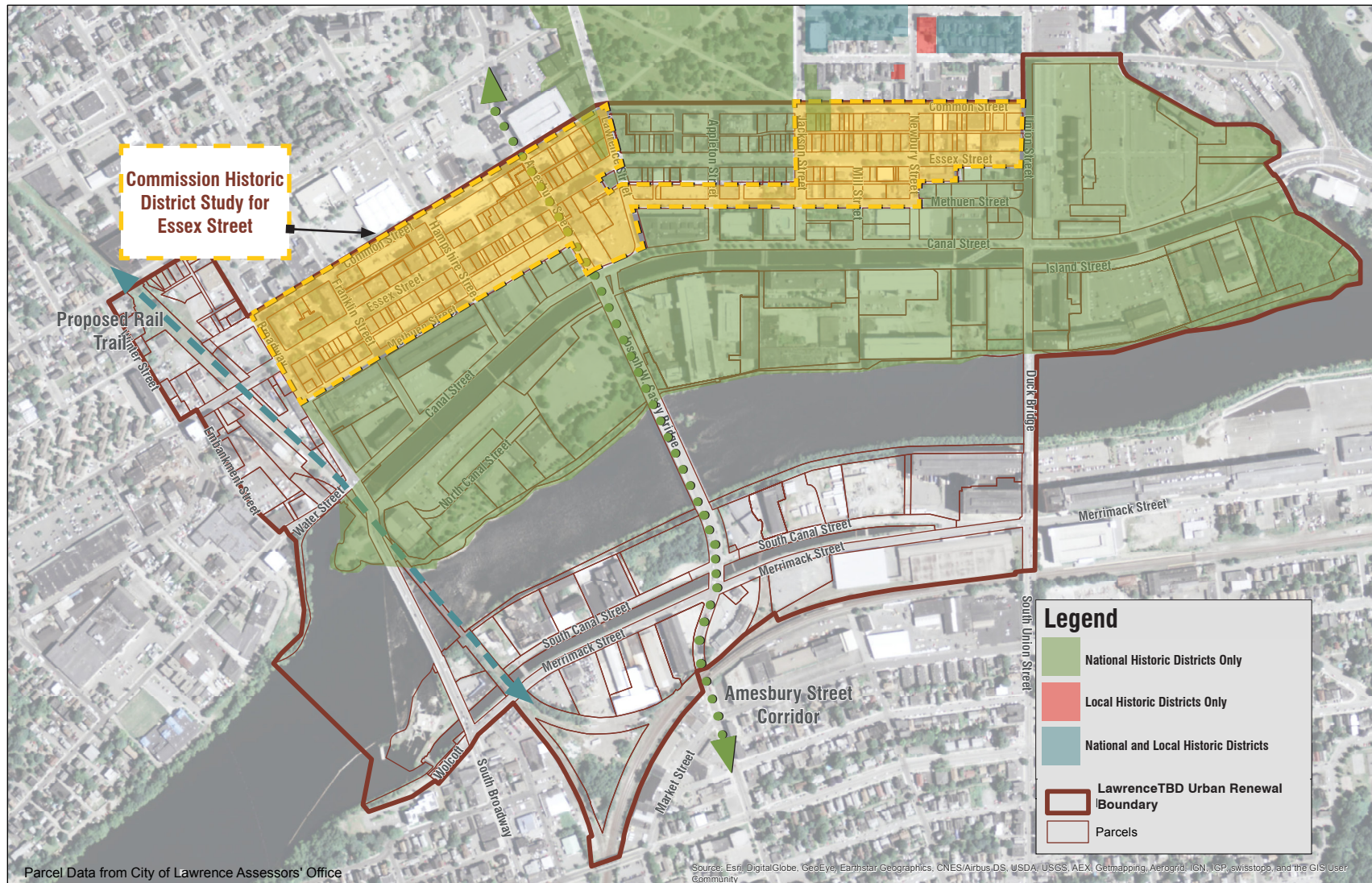


Figure E-5: Possible boundary of proposed National Register Historic District

## D Transportation and Infrastructure Improvements

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	PARTNERS	PHASING	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
2,5,6	Design and install new lighting and/or public art on Casey (Amesbury Street) Bridge.	City of Lawrence, MassDevelopment, Commonwealth of MA	Phase 1 (3-5 years)	Mass Cultural Council, MassDevelopment (Commonwealth Places), Private Sources, CDBG
3,4,6,8	Establish a new MVRTA shuttle loop connecting train station, bus terminal, public parking facilities, downtown Lawrence and Merrimack Street corridor.	City of Lawrence, MVRTA	Phase 1 (3-5 years)	MVRTA
2,3,6	Paint and clean Buckley Garage façade.	City of Lawrence, MVRTA, Elevated Thought, Essex Art Center, Northern Essex Community College, Groundwork Lawrence	Phase 1 (3-5 years)	Mass Cultural Council, MassDevelopment (Commonwealth Places), CDBG, Private Sources
1,5,6	Convert one-way streets (Franklin, Hampshire, Amesbury, Lawrence, and Common) to two-way streets to improve vehicular circulation downtown.	City of Lawrence	Phase 1 (3-5 years)	Chapter 90, MassWorks
2,5,6	Create an attractive walking loop that links the North and South Canals.	North Canal Coalition, Groundwork Lawrence, Enel	Phase 2 (5-10 years)	Chapter 90 MassWorks
2,5,6	Link the proposed Rail Trail to other pedestrian and bicycle improvements.	City of Lawrence, Commonwealth of MA, Groundwork Lawrence	Phase 2 (5-10 years)	Chapter 90 MassWorks
2,3,5,6,7	Implement coordinated streetscape improvements throughout the urban renewal area.	City of Lawrence, Commonwealth of MA	Phase 3 (10-20 years)	Chapter 90 MassWorks

### Why are these actions important to this plan?

Improvements to public infrastructure signal a community's commitment to an area. Complete Streets – those designed for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers – create a safer and more pleasant environment. Amenities such as walking loops attract current residents and employees to move throughout the district, which would shift the perception of the Merrimack River and canals to an amenity rather than a barrier. The proposed MVRTA (Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority) shuttle would connect the bus network to the commuter rail, encouraging the use of public transit. New lighting and façade improvements are an early signal of changes to come within the district.



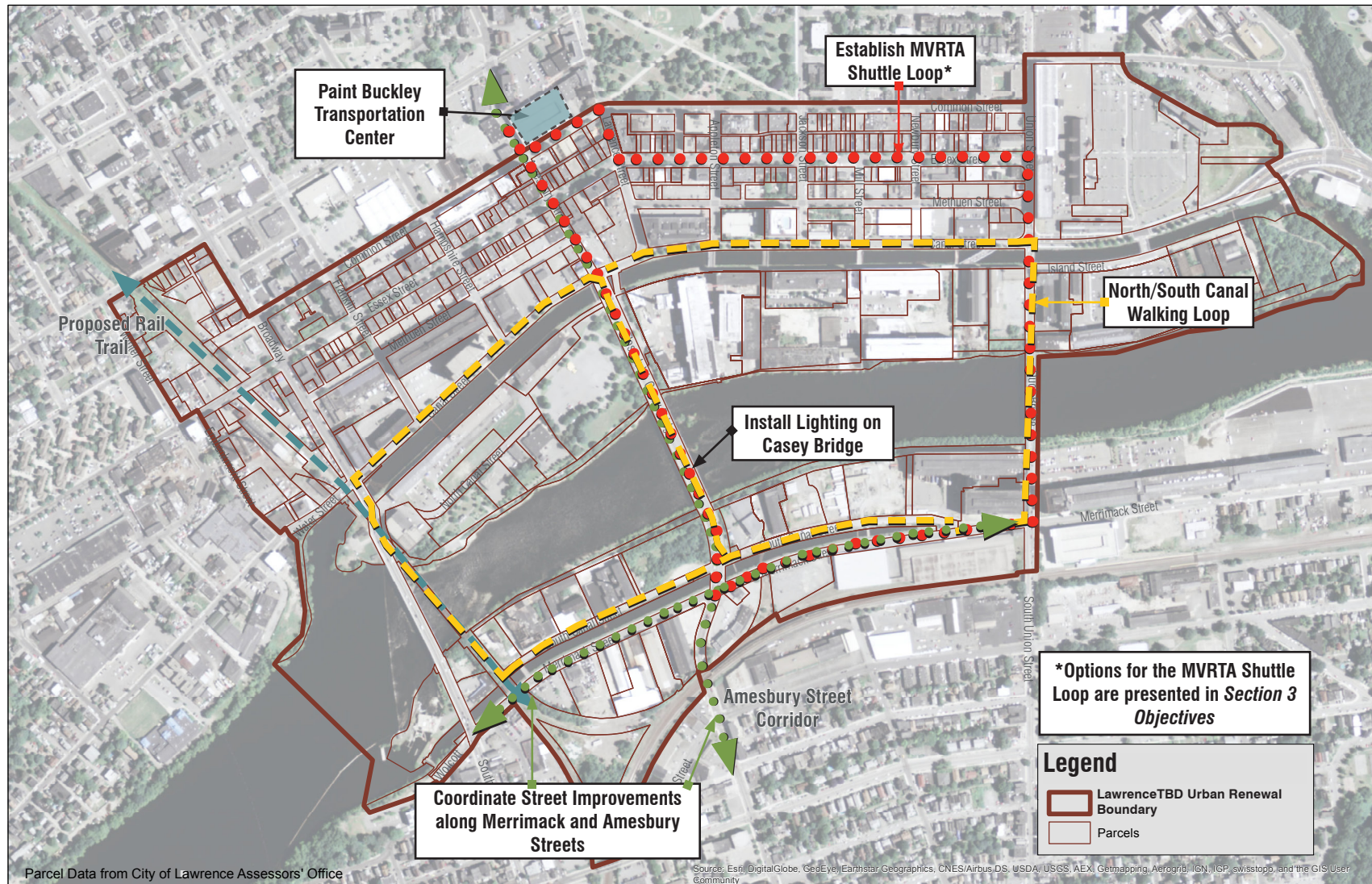


Figure E-6: Locations of proposed circulation and transportation improvements

## E.4 Timeline of Improvements

This timeline illustrates the order in which potential projects (in blue text) and other strategies (in red text) will be completed. This phasing diagram is in response to work done by the CAC and the LRA that considered which actions should come before others in order to set the stage for the success of the later actions. In general, regulatory actions precede physical interventions as additional planning for some strategies may be required to ensure that the implications of physical strategies are fully understood prior to implementation.

### IN PROGRESS (COMPLETE IN 1 YEAR)

#### PLAN APPROVAL

#### B. ESTABLISH DESIGN GUIDELINES

#### B. ESTABLISH 40R (DSGO) DISTRICT

#### B. ESTABLISH PLANNED INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

#### B. AMEND LANDSCAPE ORDINANCE

#### C. ESTABLISH JOINT PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE

#### D. MVRTA SHUTTLE LOOP

#### D. PAINT BUCKLEY GARAGE

#### D. MASSWORKS APPLICATION FOR MERRIMACK STREET (STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS)

#### D. ACQUISITION OF SOUTH CANAL PARCELS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS ON MERRIMACK STREET

### PHASE I (COMPLETE IN 3-5 YEARS)

#### A. FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR CATALYST PROJECT(S)

#### B. ESTABLISH 43D SITE(S) ON MERRIMACK STREET

#### C. PREPARE STUDY FOR ESSEX STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

#### C. PREPARE BILINGUAL PERMITTING GUIDE

#### A. CATALYST PROJECT(S)

#### A. PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS

#### D. CASEY (AMESBURY STREET) BRIDGE LIGHTING

## PHASE II (COMPLETE IN 5-10 YEARS)

## PHASE III (COMPLETE IN 10-20 YEARS)

A. CATALYST PROJECT(S)

A. PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS

A. EXPAND AND PROGRAM PEMBERTON PARK

D. CREATE THE NORTH/SOUTH CANAL WALKING LOOP

D. CREATE THE RAIL TRAIL

A. DEVELOP PARKING STRUCTURE

A. REDEVELOP MERRIMACK PAPER MILL SITE

D. TIE FUTURE CHAPTER 90 CONSTRUCTION TO STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS AND INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN GUIDELINES

## PLAN AMENDMENT AND REAPPROVAL

*This Urban Renewal Plan has a life of twenty years. While it may be modified during its life, the LRA should begin reviewing the plan at least two years before its expiration date to determine whether there is a need to renew the plan and what modifications might be required as part of that renewal. The strategies should be reviewed annually to determine whether the actions have been effective, and to evaluate the need to make changes to the proposed actions.*

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## E.5 Format


The organization of this Urban Renewal Plan is consistent with the requirements of Chapter 121B and the format detailed in 760 CMR 12.00, as promulgated by DHCD. Relevant sections and headings include reference numbers that correspond to particular portions of 760 CMR 12.00, beginning with 12.02 (1). Supplementary information, including technical studies related to the determination of blighted conditions, are provided in the appendices, which are separately bound.

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## E.6 Review

The LRA will review progress of the implementation plan on an annual basis to determine what aspects of the plan have been completed during the preceding year, what work is in progress, and which projects may be appropriate to commence in the upcoming year. The LRA may present such report of progress to the City Council on an annual basis.





**LAWRENCE**  
TBD

An urban renewal plan for a stronger future for Lawrence.  
Un plan de renovación urbana para un mejor futuro para Lawrence.

For me, Lawrence is...	in 2025, will be...
Para mí, Lawrence es...	en el 2025, será...

-Lawrence is a Beautiful City with unmet Opportunities

-In 2025 Lawrence will be a Vibrant City, with lot of Jobs and greener spaces.

LawrenceTBD

# 1. CHARACTERISTICS

# 1 760 CMR 12.02 (1): Characteristics

## 1.1 Description of the Plan Area

The City of Lawrence is a community defined by its mills in terms of its history, cultures, and development patterns. The city has been welcoming immigrants for more than a century, first by offering work in the mills, and later as an inexpensive place to begin building a life in the United States.

### DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

The Lawrence History Center has a map overlay created by Dave Russell which depicts the City's transformation over time (<http://www.lawrencehistorycenter.org/maps>). This overlay begins in 1844, when the area was mostly farmland, and traces the development of the City from its earliest planned grid to 2008.

The central portion of Lawrence is the grid created by the east-west streets of Common, Essex, Methuen, and Canal. The Essex Company

planned this community; by 1850, the grid, portions of Amesbury Street, the North Canal, the rail line, and Broadway were laid out. The Duck Bridge appeared by 1869 as an additional north-south link across the Merrimack River. Merrimack Street was also more defined in 1869, as was the grid of streets below it. A portion of South Canal had been built at this point.

By 1873, the island between North Canal and the Merrimack River was fully developed. More buildings appeared along Common Street and Essex Street. In 1881, a rail bridge appeared where the Casey Bridge (Amesbury Street) is now. By 1889, the grid between Amesbury Street and the Everett Mills had been mostly developed.

Maps in the early 1900s showed development of the crossing at what is now Casey Bridge; it became a rail and road bridge in the 1920s and a single bridge in the early 1960s. The remainder of South Canal was built by 1905 but reconfigured in the 1960s.

The maps in the 1960s indicated larger projects; in part due to large-scale urban renewal efforts during this period. The connections to I-495 appear in the 1962 map; by 1981, Amesbury Street was in its present form and many of the smaller streets in the original urban renewal area have been reconfigured to create larger blocks.

### LOCATION AND ACCESS

The City is located close to the New Hampshire border. It is easily accessible by I-495 and I-93, which link Lawrence to Boston and New Hampshire, and by state routes 114, 110, and 28, which provide easy access to surrounding cities and towns.

The urban renewal area is centered on the Merrimack River, the original source of power for the mills and the reason the Essex Company began to develop the City. Common Street is the northern boundary; the southern boundary is the MBTA railroad track that parallels Merrimack Street.



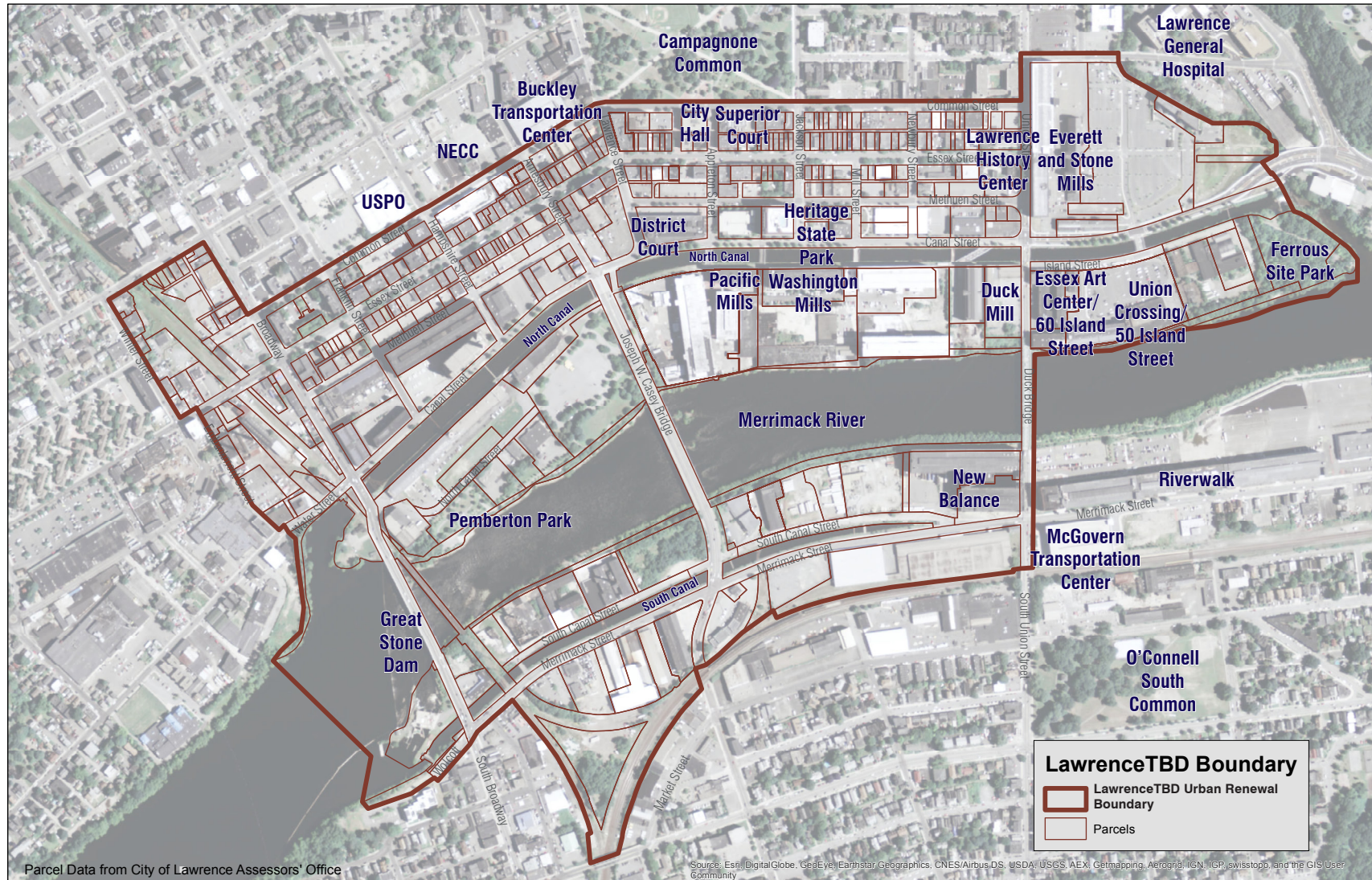


Figure 1-1: The LawrenceTBD Urban Renewal District (Plan Boundary)

The Spicket River forms the eastern boundary and Embankment Street and Winter Street create the western boundary.

Three bridges cross the Merrimack, connecting the City north to south: the Duck Bridge, the Casey Bridge, and the O’Leary Bridge. However, these bridges can also be pinch points in terms of traffic circulation. The State has invested significant funds in the rehabilitation of the bridges over the past decade.

Two regional transportation centers lie within the urban renewal area. The MVRTA’s Buckley Transportation Center is a hub for public buses and is located north of the river. The commuter rail to Boston leaves from the McGovern Transportation Center south of the river. Lawrence is on the Haverhill line. An older rail line that extended north through the city has been abandoned and is the subject of an area-wide brown-fields study.

## ECONOMY AND CULTURE

The northern portion of the urban renewal area is the home of civic, educational, and cultural institutions that act as anchors:

- City Hall
- Essex County Superior Court
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts District Court
- Northern Essex Community College
- Essex Art Center
- Lawrence Heritage State Park
- Lawrence History Center

In addition, Cambridge College has a satellite campus on Merrimack Street. Lawrence General Hospital, the largest hospital in the county, is located on the northeastern border of the urban renewal area.

The City has a strong group of nonprofit organizations who have been instrumental in projects and initiatives to strengthen and support

the community. These organizations include the following:

- Lawrence Partnership
- North Canal Coalition
- Groundwork Lawrence
- Lawrence CommunityWorks
- Many neighborhood groups

The businesses in the urban renewal area range from large corporations, such as New Balance, to an active, vibrant small business community. Essex Street, Broadway, and the surrounding area are home to many family-owned shops and service businesses. The area includes restaurants that reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the City and a vibrant night life based on clubs located primarily at the eastern end of Essex Street.

The physical condition of the area reflects the economic decline that followed the loss of the mills as the economic drivers. While much of the historic fabric is intact (including buildings and, north of the river, the original street grid),

some of the buildings have been renovated with inappropriate materials or methods, or have not been fully maintained.

Efforts at revitalization vary throughout the area. Recent successful residential development in the mills includes Washington Mills, Union Crossing Phase 1, and Loft 550; other projects including the Pacific Mills and Loft 550 are in construction; and several additional projects are in the permitting stage. Redevelopment of the larger mill properties for commercial and light industrial uses has been more challenging because although rental rates are lower for commercial uses, vacancies for such uses are higher in both the City and the region, and fewer subsidies and tax credits are available for commercial development.

These same pressures appear at a smaller scale for the buildings in the downtown. While the ground floors tend to be leased to a variety of businesses, the upper floors are vacant or underutilized. The difficulty of investing in these buildings is reflected in the physical deteriora-

tion of some of the façades and the use of inappropriate materials to repair the historic fabric.

Further information about the physical and economic characteristics of the urban renewal area are provided in *Section 2 Eligibility*.

**SNAPSHOT: URBAN RENEWAL AREA**

	URBAN RENEWAL AREA	CITY OF LAWRENCE	PERCENTAGE OF CITY
Total # of Properties	388	~12,711	3.1%
Total Acres	~364	~3,546	10.3%
Total Valuation	~214.2 million	~\$3.681 billion	5.8%



## 1.2 Required Maps

760 CMR 12.02(1) requires the following maps:

REQUIRED MAP UDNER 760 CMR 12.02(1)	ASSOCIATED FIGURE(S)
(a) Boundaries of the project area and topography.	Figure 1-1, Figure 1-2
(b) Boundaries of areas proposed for clearance and areas proposed for rehabilitation.	Figure 1-9
(c) Property lines and the footprint of buildings and parking areas on each lot, existing and proposed.	Figure 1-3
(d) Existing uses, including identification of land in mixed uses and land in public use, and the current zoning.	Figure 1-4, Figure 1-5
(e) Proposed land uses, other activities, and zoning.	Figure 1-6, Figure 1-7
(f) All thoroughfares, public rights-of-way and easements, existing and proposed.	Figure 1-8
(g) Parcels to be acquired.	Figure 1-9A, Figure 19-C
(h) Lots to be created for disposition.	Figure 1-9B, Figure 19-C
(i) Buildings to be demolished.	Figure 1-10, Figure 19-C
(j) Buildings to be rehabilitated.	Figure 1-10, Figure 19-C
(k) Buildings to be constructed.	Figure 1-10, Figure 19-C

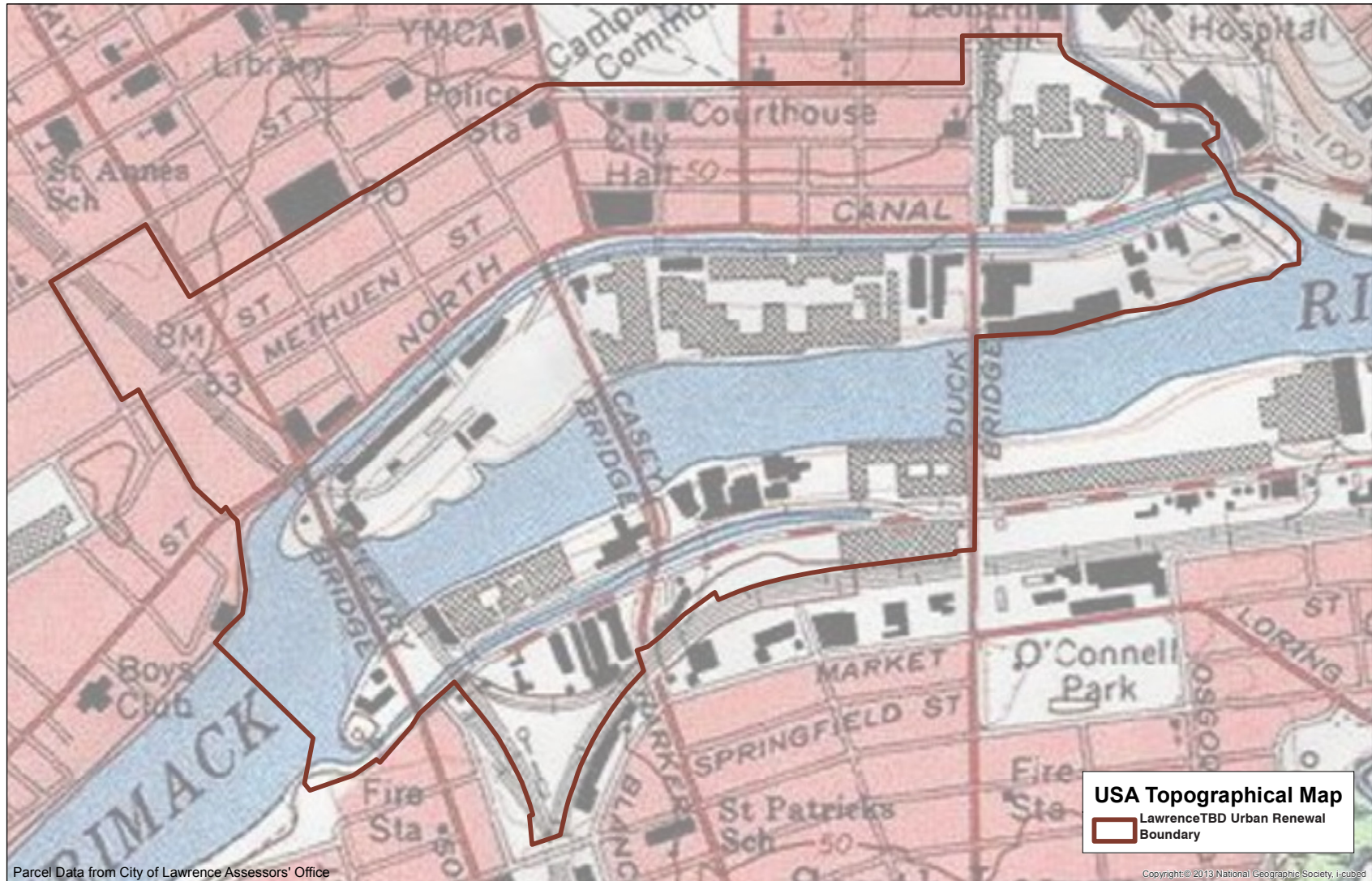


Figure 1-2 Plan Boundary and Topography of the Project Area



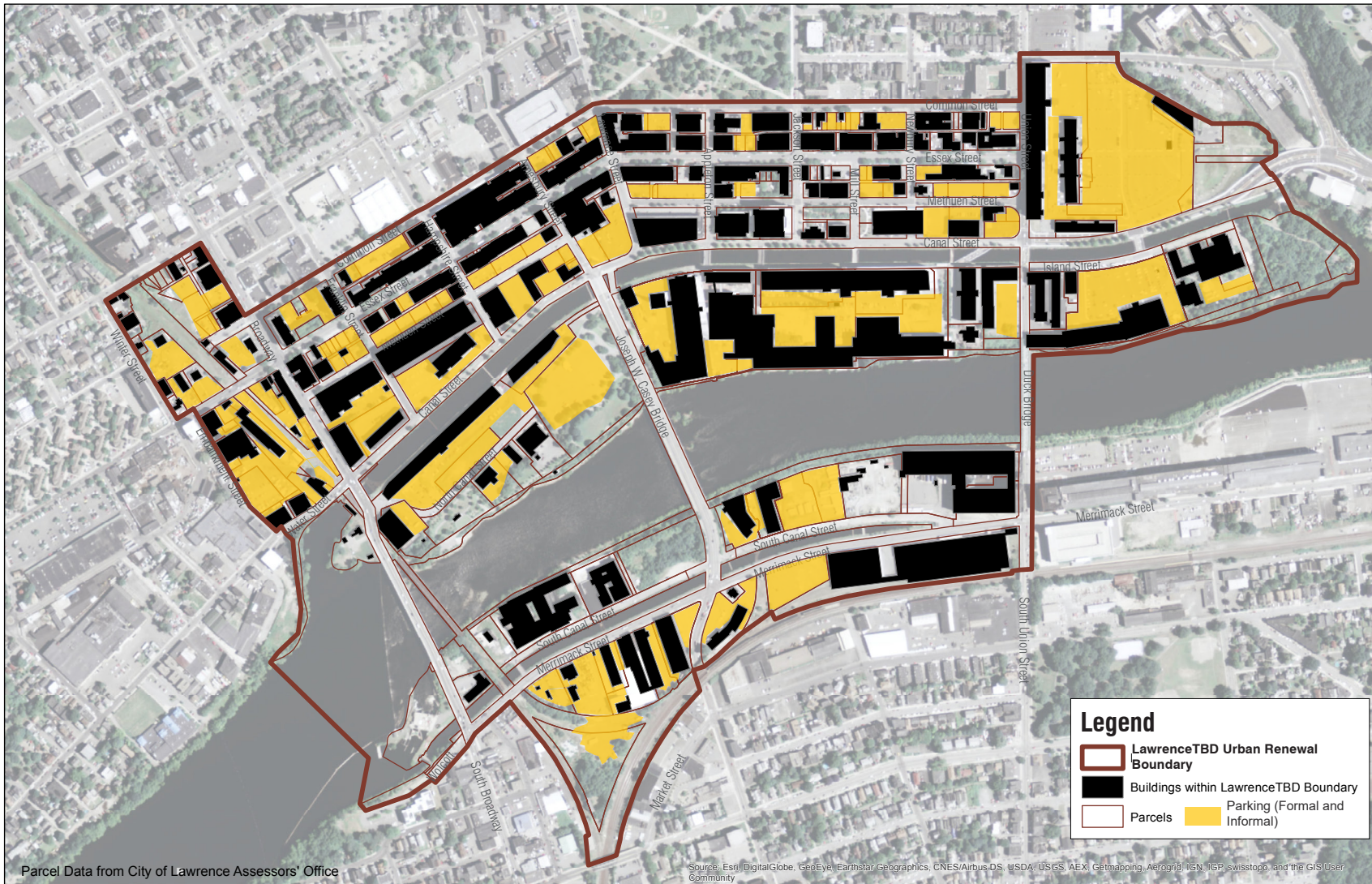


Figure 1-3: Property Lines, Building Footprints, Parking



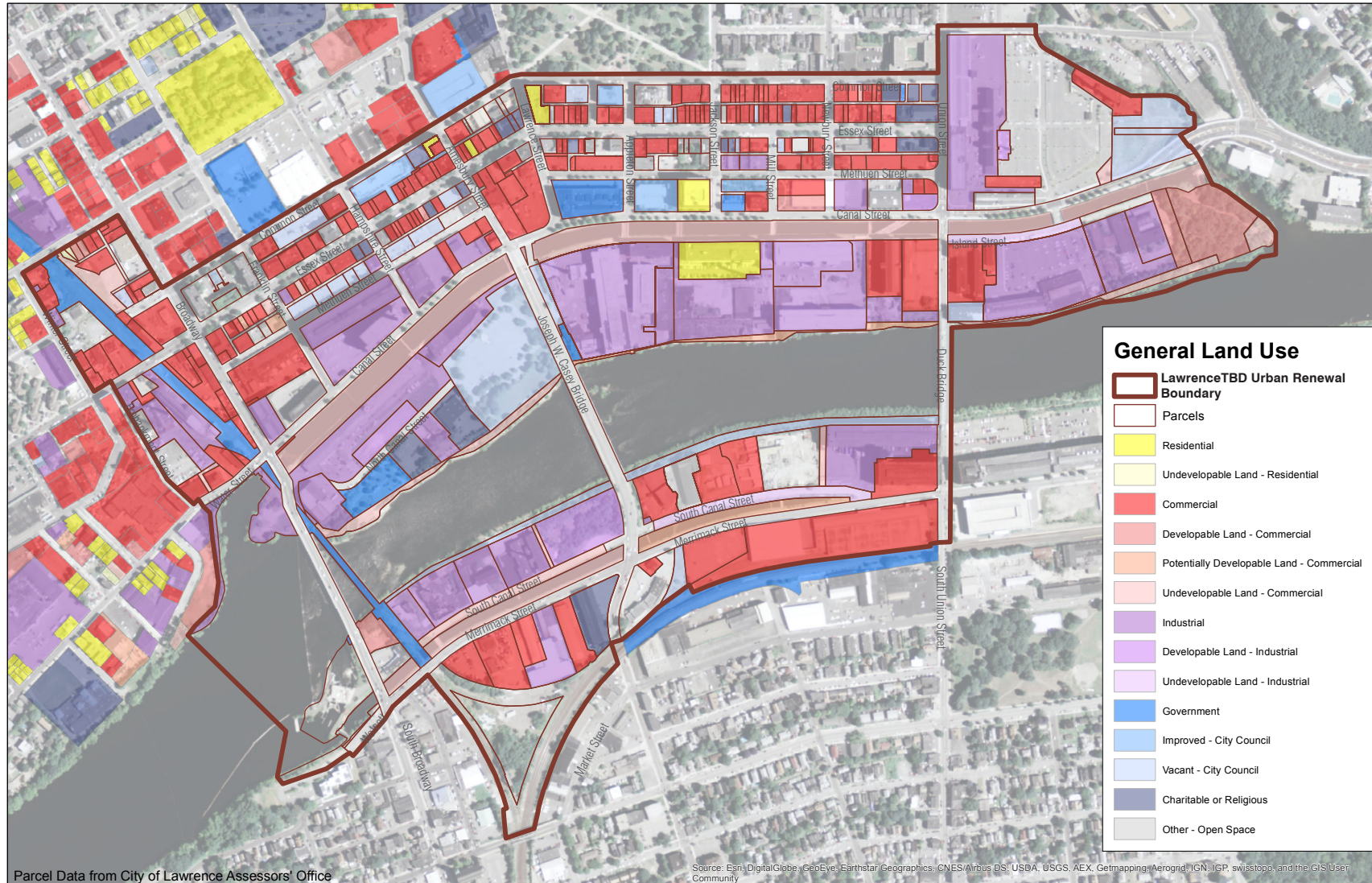


Figure 1-4: Existing Uses (Note: mill properties that have recently converted to residential use have not been updated in the City Assessors' database)



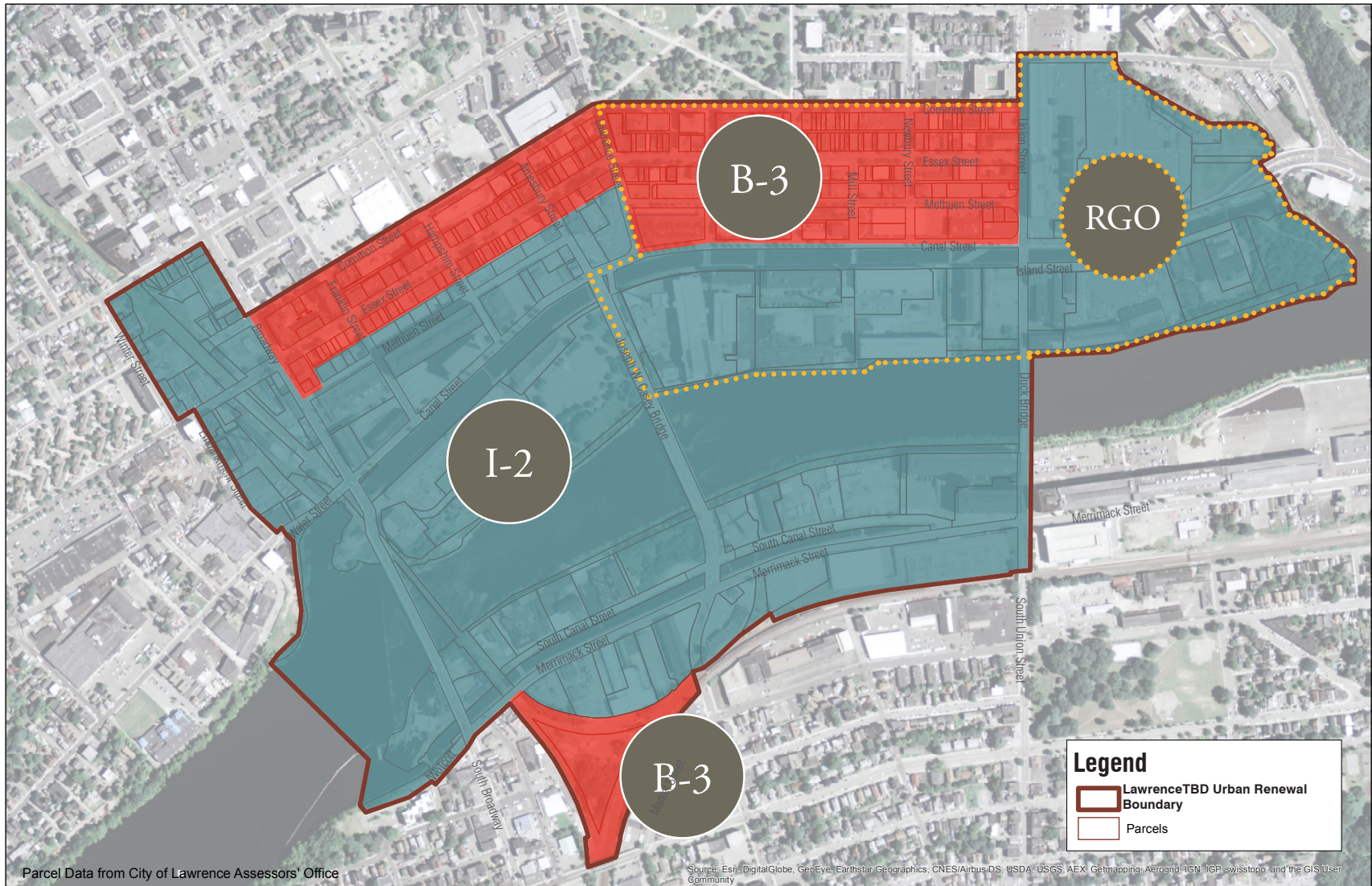


Figure 1-5: Existing Zoning



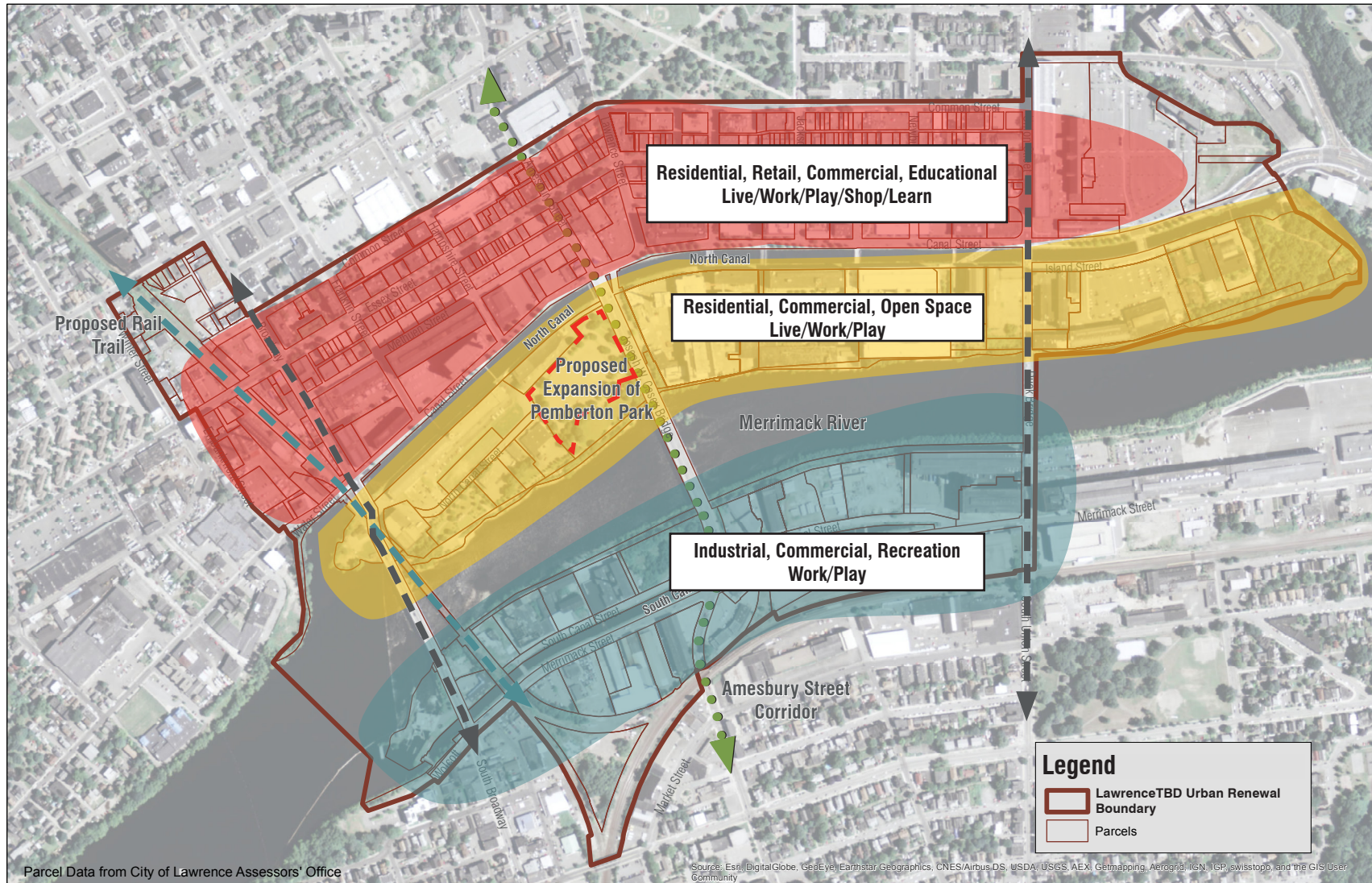


Figure 1-6: Proposed Land Uses and Activities



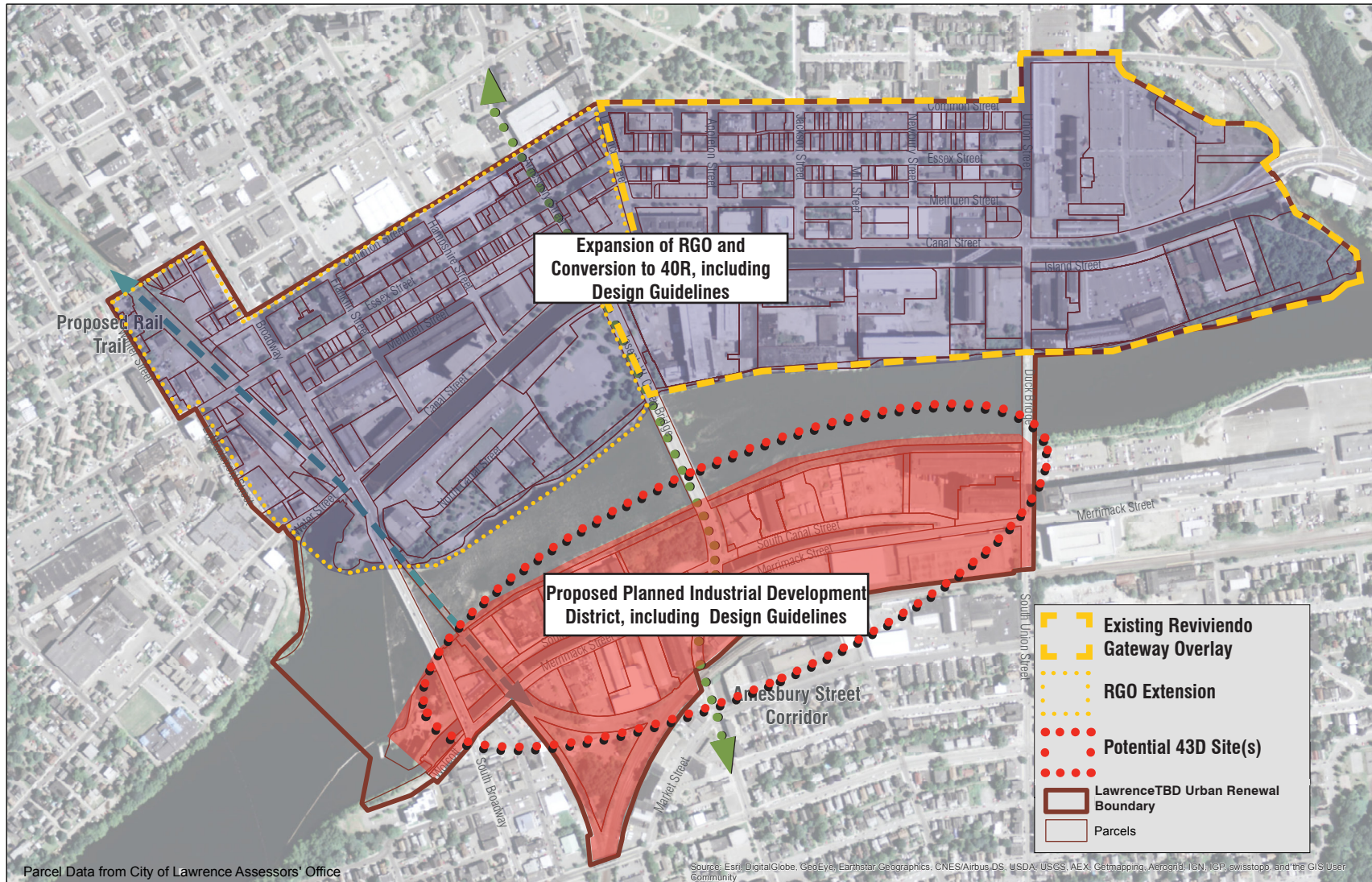


Figure 1-7: Proposed Zoning



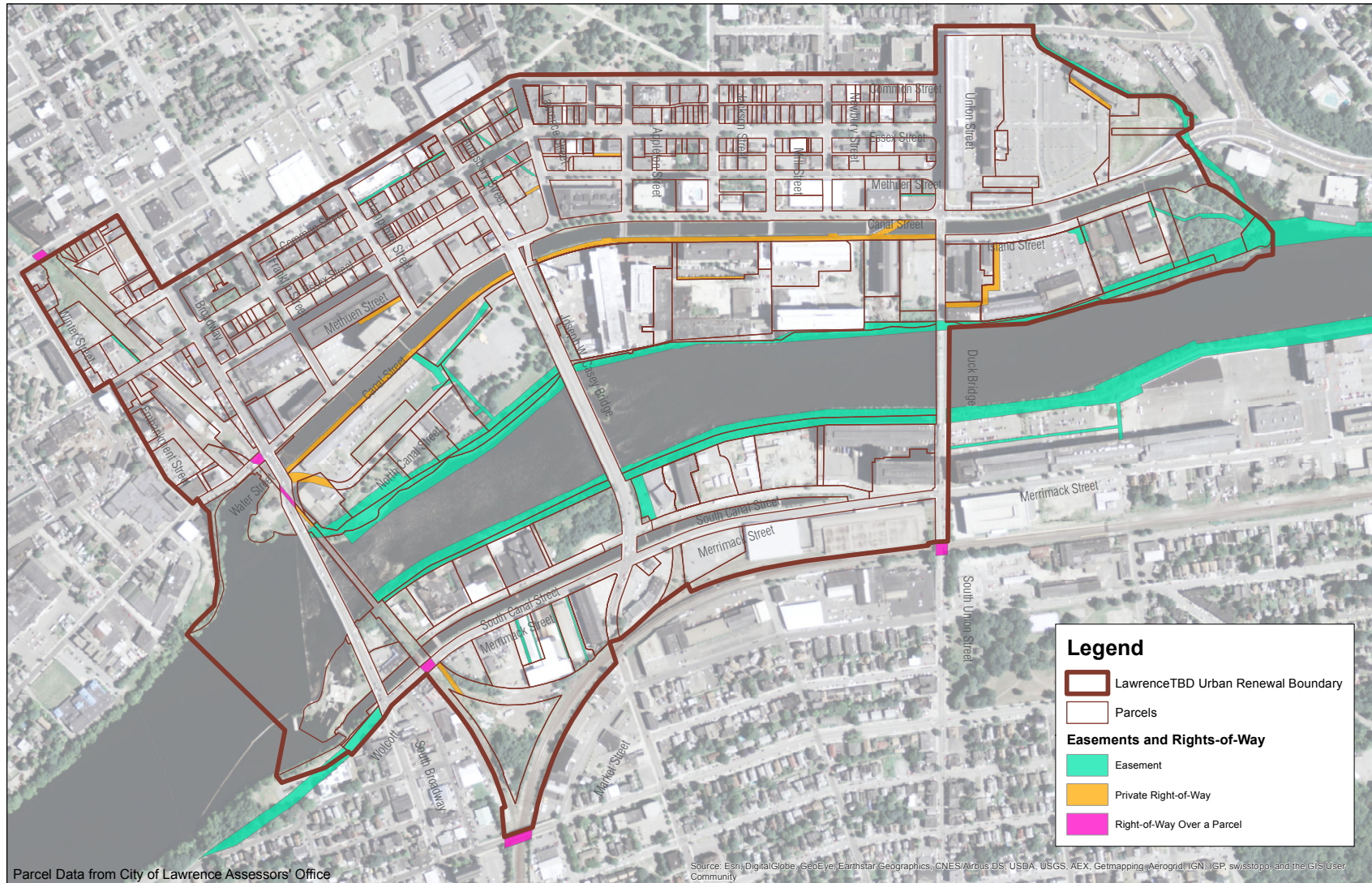


Figure 1-8: Thoroughfares, Public Rights-of Way and Easements



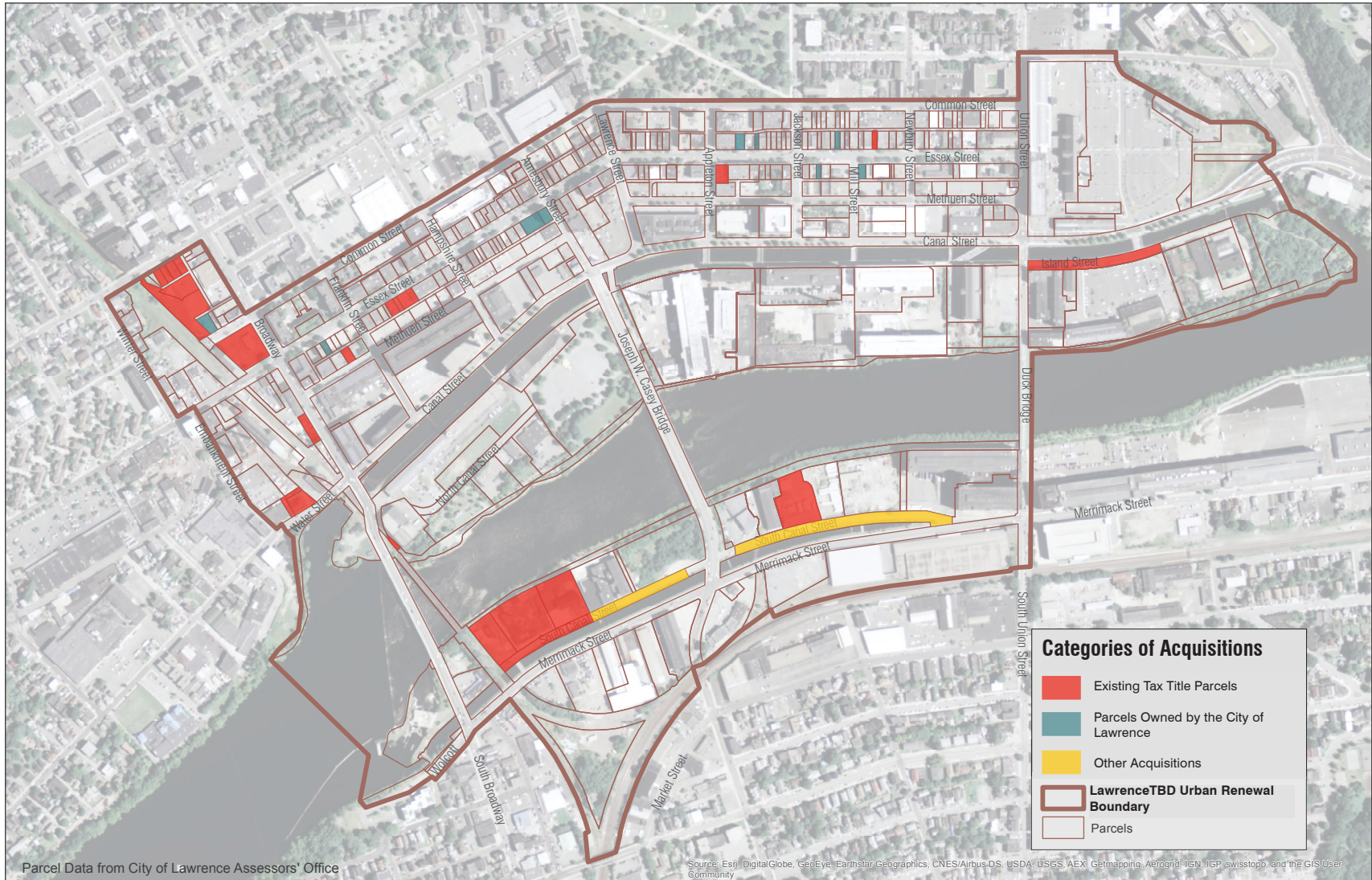


Figure 1-9A: Parcels for Acquisition



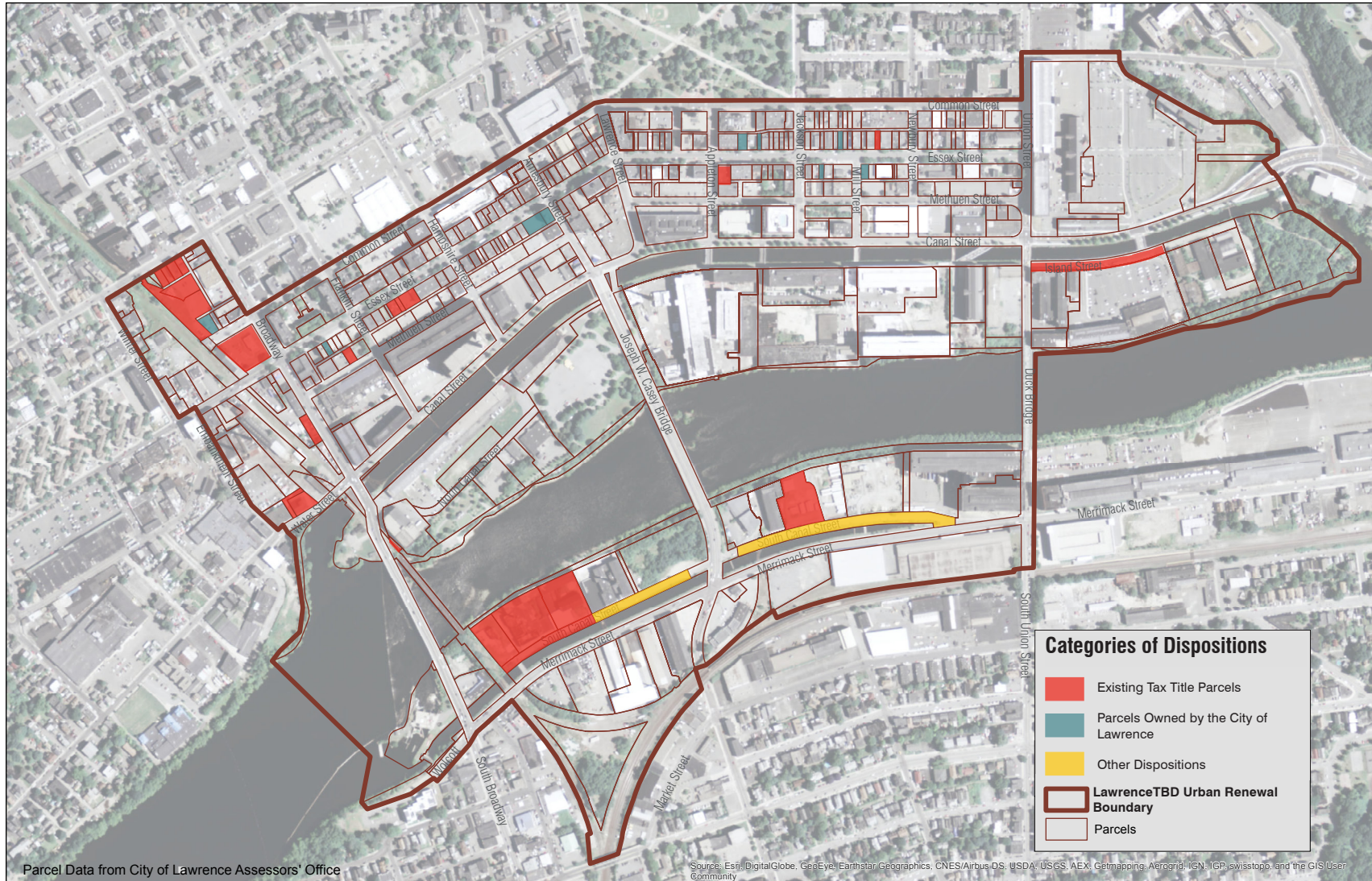


Figure 1-9B: Parcels for Disposition



PARCEL ID	ADDRESS	OWNER	PROPERTY SIZE (ACRES)	ASSESSED VALUE (2015)	ACQUISITION?	DISPOSITION?	POTENTIAL ACTIVITY
143-22	Broadway	Merrimack Falls Llc	1.231575475	\$772,100	Y	Y	Rehab
144-6	14 Broadway	Gregory Realty Trust	0.166026902	\$142,800	Y	Y	Rehab
166-51	Broadway (Rear Of 92-98)	Fulton Street Corp	0.918589586	\$12,700	Y	Y	Rehab
166-48	611 Common St	Pino Realty Llc	0.056273124	\$352,200	Y	Y	Rehab
166-46	617 Common St	City Of Lawrence	0.136372782	\$60,900	Y	Y	Rehab
166-58	Rear 617 Common St	Fulton Street Corp	0.335782817	\$75,200	Y	Y	Rehab
106-59	111-113 Essex St	A & K Rlty Trst	0.055120345	\$27,600	Y	Y	Rehab
106-38	122-124 Essex St	City Of Lawrence	0.069046898	\$13,800	Y	Y	Rehab
106-53	147-149 Essex St	City Of Lawrence	0.056368383	\$4,500	Y	Y	Rehab
106-43	158-160 Essex St	City Of Lawrence	0.043982404	\$7,500	Y	Y	Rehab
106-44	162-164 Essex St	Movimiento Misionero Mundial Inc	0.064534777	\$22,200	Y	Y	Rehab
106-14	205 Essex St	City Of Lawrence	0.038083033	\$11,700	Y	Y	Rehab
106-12	217-223 Essex St	City Of Lawrence	0.096517947	\$20,300	Y	Y	Rehab
106-27	232-236 Essex St	234 Essex St Trust	0.146411193	\$479,700	Y	Y	Rehab
125-9	370 Essex Street	City Of Lawrence	0.093762579	\$652,600	Y	Y	Rehab
125-10	372-386 Essex St	City Of Lawrence	0.198442013	\$92,100	Y	Y	Rehab
145-39	500-502 Essex St	Theophanes Realty Trust	0.168791213	\$68,400	Y	Y	Rehab
145-40	506-508 Essex St	Theophanes Realty Trust	0.044235857	\$20,300	Y	Y	Rehab

Figure 1-9C: List of Parcels for Acquisition and Disposition

PARCEL ID	ADDRESS	OWNER	PROPERTY SIZE (ACRES)	ASSESSED VALUE (2015)	ACQUISITION?	DISPOSITION?	POTENTIAL ACTIVITY
<b>145-41</b>	510-512 Essex St	Theophanes Realty Trust	0.09212416	\$371,800	Y	Y	Rehab
<b>145-57</b>	568 Essex St	Sherman Grille Inc	0.054485677	\$16,300	Y	Y	Rehab
<b>85-20</b>	Island St	50 Island St Llc	0.825232006	\$4,000	Y	Y	Rehab
<b>166-62</b>	270-272 Lowell St	290 Lowell St Realty Trust	0.087122183	\$66,400	Y	Y	Rehab
<b>166-59</b>	262 Lowell St	Fulton Street Corp	0.090937534	\$128,100	Y	Y	Rehab
<b>166-60</b>	264 Lowell St	Fulton Street Corp	0.11255867	\$208,300	Y	Y	Rehab
<b>166-61</b>	266 Lowell St	Fulton Street Corp	0.079192228	\$61,300	Y	Y	Rehab
<b>145-51</b>	333 Methuen St	Bellmore Methuen 333 Realty Trs	0.08492929	\$211,200	Y	Y	Rehab
<b>103-16</b>	So Canal St	Enel North America	1.570676164	\$114,800	Y	Y	Constr
<b>122-34</b>	So Canal St	Merrimack St Redevelopment Authority Llc	0.591140829	\$5,800	Y	Y	Constr
<b>123-13</b>	So Canal St	Enel North America	0.640334031	\$22,700	Y	Y	Constr
<b>123-1</b>	7 So Canal St	Merrimack St Redevelopment Authority Llc	0.776716134	\$161,500	Y	Y	Demo/ Constr
<b>123-2</b>	9 So Canal St	Merrimack St Redevelopment Authority Llc	1.538657676	\$360,000	Y	Y	Demo/ Constr
<b>123-3</b>	19 So Canal St	Merrimack St Redevelopment Authority Llc	1.173235004	\$180,000	Y	Y	Demo/ Constr
<b>103-6-A</b>	55 So Canal St	Reservoir Management Corp G	1.171668783	\$168,500	Y	Y	Rehab
<b>143-16</b>	9 Water St	Infante Moises De Jesus J/T	0.261438817	\$334,500	Y	Y	Rehab
<b>143-15</b>	15 Water St	De Jesus Infante Moises	0.107668808	\$23,300	Y	Y	Rehab

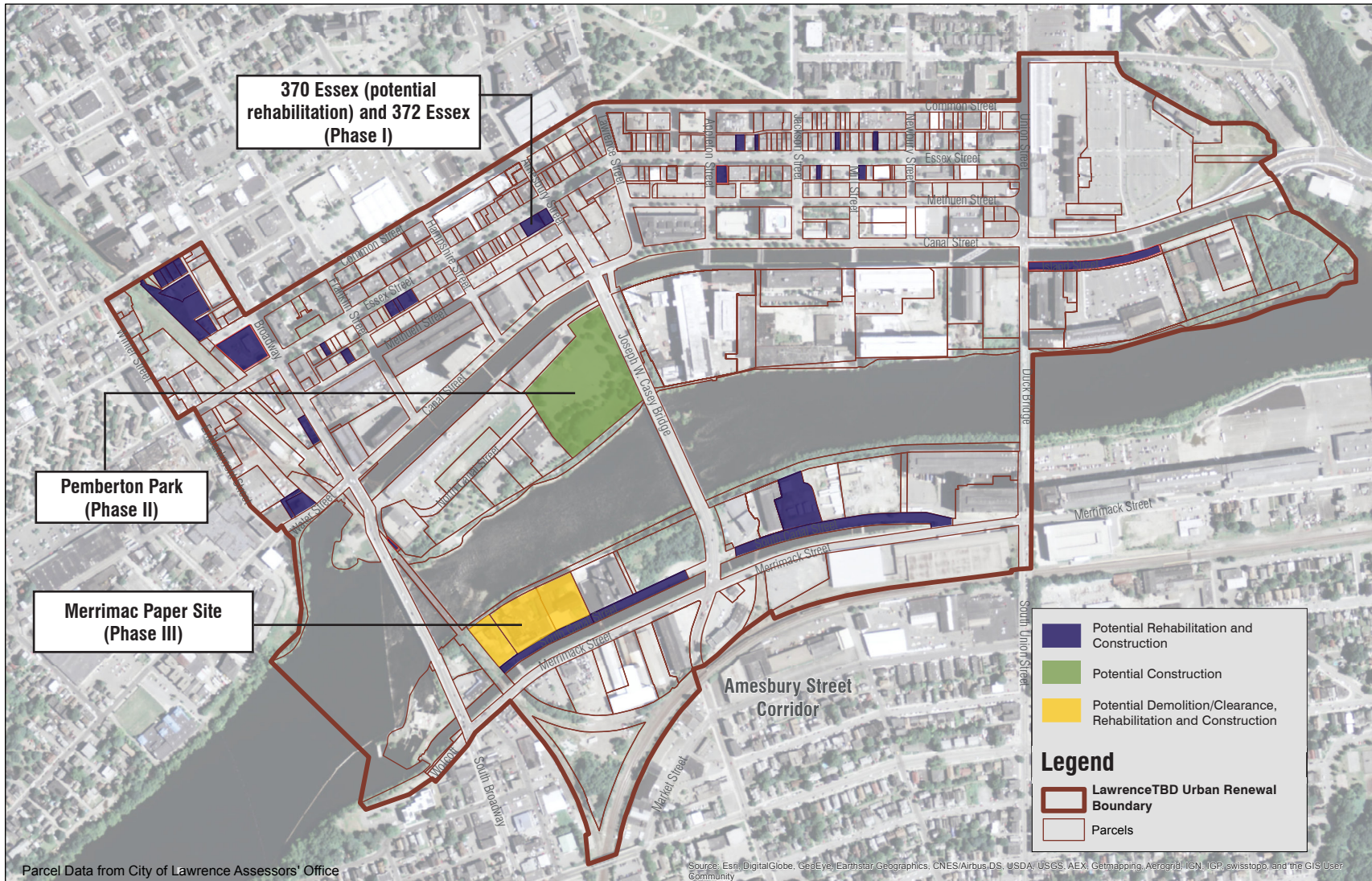


Figure 1-10: Buildings to be Demolished/Cleared, Rehabilitated, and Constructed

## 1.3 Existing and Proposed Uses

### EXISTING LAND USES

The urban renewal area is already a mix of uses: retail, office, housing, and industrial. (See Figure 1-4.) In general, smaller commercial and retail uses are located north of the North Canal in the historic business district centered on Essex Street, while larger businesses and, increasingly, residential uses, are located on the island. Within the urban renewal area, the Merrimack Street Corridor is a mix of manufacturing sites (New Balance) and sites that are underutilized (storage units, vacant land) relative to their location close to both the center of the City and access to I-495.

### PROPOSED LAND USES

The proposed uses for the urban renewal area are similar to the existing ones. The urban re-

newal area has been divided into three zones as shown in Figure 1.6:

- Live/work/shop/play/learn area of Essex Street and the surrounding area (red)
- Live/work/play area of the mill district (yellow)
- Work/play area of the Merrimack Street corridor (blue)

One goal of the proposed zoning changes (see *Section 1.5 Proposed Zoning*) is to encourage residential uses in the upper stories of existing buildings along Essex Street. The LRA would also like to encourage light manufacturing options, such as food production, along the Merrimack Street Corridor to take advantage of vacant lots that could be redeveloped into new manufacturing suitable for contemporary light industrial uses.

The LRA is considering two initiatives that would reinforce community priorities around land use within the urban renewal area. The first initiative is the implementation of 40R zoning

north of the Merrimack River. This proposed change has the potential to increase housing in the underutilized upper floors, mostly along Essex Street. The second proposal is a Planned Industrial Development District along the Merrimack Street Corridor, as suggested by the *Merrimack Street Land Use Planning Study*, completed by McCabe Consulting in 2016. This proposed change would reinforce light manufacturing related to the target industries discussed in this plan and has the potential to allow uses such as accessory generation of solar and wind power.

Both of these are discussed further under *Section 1.5 Proposed Zoning*.

## CHAPTER 91 AND LAND USE

The Merrimack River is subject to the requirements of Chapter 91 (The Massachusetts Public Waterfront Act). The non-tidal portions of the Merrimack River are specifically listed as being within the jurisdiction of Chapter 91. Improve-



ments within the jurisdictional boundary will need to comply with the restrictions related to the water-dependency of uses and public access requirements.

## OPEN SPACE

Public open space is critical in an area with a population density like that in Lawrence (see *Section 2 Eligibility*). An analysis of the public open space within and near the urban renewal area reveals some surprising gaps. (See Figure 1-11.)

Within the urban renewal area itself, there are six small parks:

- Lawrence Heritage Park (0.38 acres)
- Pemberton Park (~6 acres)
- Ferrous Site Park (5.14 acres)
- Oxford Park (~2.89 acres)
- Union Crossing Playground (~0.14 acres)
- Pocket park on the northeast corner of Union and Canal Streets (~0.25 acres)

While Lawrence Heritage Park is easily accessible, it is small. With the exception of Pemberton Park, most of the other parks are concentrated at the eastern end of the urban renewal area.

The Spicket River Greenway was an important addition to the City's open spaces, and links both the Ferrous Site Park and Oxford Park to a larger network of parks throughout the northern part of the City.

Although it is not within the urban renewal area, Campagnone Common is within a quarter-mile radius of a portion of Essex, Methuen, and Canal Streets. Using that same radius – a typical measure of a five-minute walk – Oxford Park and Ferrous Site Park serve a portion of the eastern end of the urban renewal area, while the current Pemberton Park serves a portion of the west side. South Common reaches a small portion of the southern end. The proposed rail trail would be an important addition to open space and recreation along the western edge of the urban renewal area.

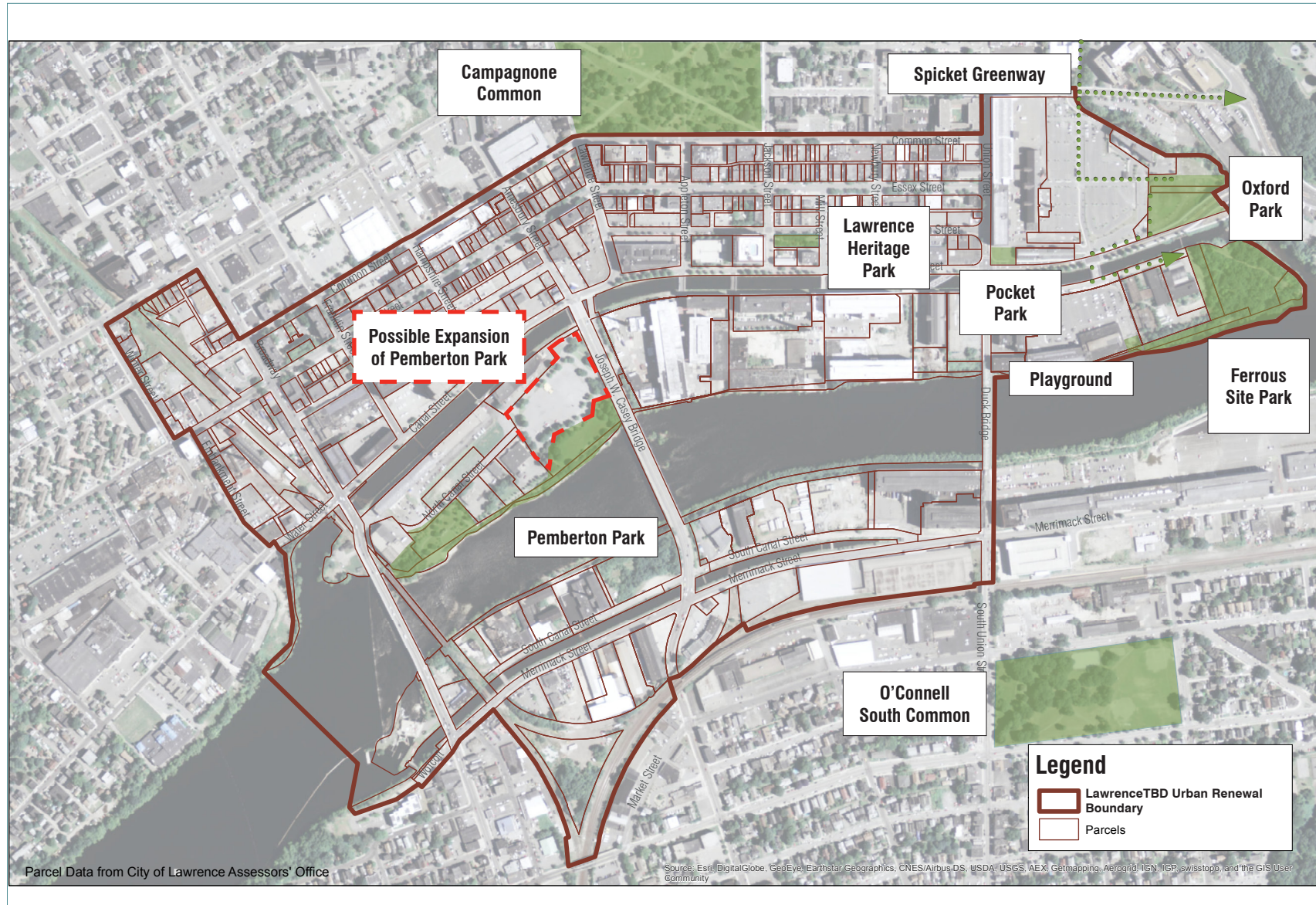


Figure 1-11: Existing Parks

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## 1.4 Current Zoning

The City's Zoning Ordinance describes the purpose of the current zoning districts within the urban renewal area as follows:

- Main Business District (B-3) – Permits commercial and business uses in the downtown business area, ensuring a pleasant, healthy and safe environment, and encouraging pedestrian use of retail facilities.
- General Industrial Park District (I-2) – Permits the most intense industrial uses of the City in a safe, healthy and pleasant environment, with no impact on other permitted uses nearby.
- Reviviendo Gateway District Overlay (RGO) – Permits economically sustainable development, and unlocks the potential of historic land use patterns and buildings for revitalization.

During the public process, participants at public forums and the CAC meetings raised concerns about how to address the affordability gap for housing within the City. The current zoning

permits the following residential uses throughout the district:

- **Residential multi-family:** Permitted by Special Permit, with conditions governed by Section 29-23 (i) and (cc).
- **Planned Unit Developments:** Permitted by Special Permit, allowing a combination of retail, offices, light industrial or multi-family residential uses (at least 35% open space).
- **Mixed use:** Permitted in the B-3 and RGO districts, but residential uses within a mixed-use building are excluded from the I-2 district.
- **Artist live/work units:** Permitted as-of-right in the RGO district.

Dimensional standards vary by district. The B-3 district requires a minimum lot area of 750 square feet per dwelling unit (350 feet per dwelling unit for buildings of six stories or more). The I-2 district has no minimum lot area for dwelling units.

The B-3 district has no front, rear, or side yard setback; the I-2 district has a thirty-foot front yard setback, and a setback of twenty-five feet for the side and rear yards for a parcel that abuts a residential district. When the lot is a through lot (frontage on both sides, the front yard setback of thirty feet applies to both frontages in the I-2 district.

The building height in B-3 is limited to twelve stories and 140 feet; there is no limit in the I-2 district. Lot coverage is limited to 50% for a dwelling in B-3; there is no limitation in I-2.

On-site parking and loading requirements for both districts are governed by Tables 4 and 5.

The RGO has a different set of dimensional requirements that apply to those applicants who take advantage of the provision of this overlay zoning. The parking requirements (Table 4) are reduced, but only for the artist live/work space. The RGO does allow a developer to meet the off-street parking requirements with a ten-year lease for spaces in a public or private facility

within 1,000 feet of the property line of the project.

The required setbacks in the I-2 district do not apply to existing buildings in that district, but 600 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit is required.

All development in the RGO is required to undergo site plan review.

## 1.5 Proposed Zoning

The LRA plans to make three changes to existing zoning. The first is to expand the Revivendo Gateway Overlay (RGO) district, and, as part of that expansion, convert the portion of the RGO within the urban renewal area to a 40R District (also known as a Smart Growth Overlay District; 40R refers to the appropriate chapter under the Massachusetts General Laws).

The second zoning change is to explicitly link the existing landscape ordinance to a mitigation fund that would support the City's Complete Streets program.

The third change under consideration is the establishment of a Planned Industrial Development District along Merrimack Street.

## DOWNTOWN SMART GROWTH OVERLAY DISTRICT

The RGO district already provides some flexibility in use, dimensional standards, and other zoning requirements to developers who choose to use that overlay.

Part of the discussion during this study process has been on two related topics: how to create incentives for investment in the building stock and how to control such investments to benefit the community as well as the developer.

To address these topics, the LRA turned to a regulatory tool developed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. A Smart Growth Overlay District (also known as 40R) offers greater density to prospective developers in exchange for additional affordable housing and the ability for the City to have design review on a project, which benefits the community.

The City of Lawrence already has one 40R District – the Arlington Mills 40R District. The



LRA is considering whether to expand the limits of the RGO and, at the same time, convert it to a 40R District, which would be known as the Downtown Smart Growth Overlay District, or DSGO. The existing RGO is shown in Figure 1.7 as a yellow dashed line. The proposed 40R District would include that area and be extended to the area bounded by the yellow dots. Design guidelines appropriate to the new 40R district would cover the entire area. Note that a portion of the RGO (not shown) extends beyond the urban renewal area: the LRA does not recommend converting that portion of the RGO to a 40R District.

Once the new DSGO is in place, a developer may choose to submit a development application under either the underlying zoning (B-3 or I-2) or the new 40R zoning.

An initial analysis of the differences between the existing RGO and the requirements under 40R reveal some of the areas that would need to be brought into compliance.

- The residential density for the updated district must allow a density of 20 units per acre for multifamily use
- The affordability requirements in the existing RGO would need to be upgraded to address the following 40R requirements:
  - Housing over 12 units must provide a minimum of 20% of the units as affordable.
  - Development for elderly housing or assisted living must provide a minimum of 25% as affordable.
  - Affordable units are defined those that are affordable on an annual income of less than 80% of the areawide median income as determined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
- The zoning must include a specific statement that developers must abide by Fair Housing Act
- Parking requirements must align with the Smart Growth Principles of the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
- Future Zoned Units may not burden the infrastructure and the City must note that any required upgrades will be achievable within a reasonable time limit
- Design standards must include provisions for at least the dimensional requirements for consistent and vibrant streetscapes, appropriate parking, façade treatment, open spaces and other developments standards like ground coverage, FAR, setbacks etc
- The City will be required to monitor progress and provide annual reports to DHCD

An important consideration in considering 40R as an option is the payments from the State to the City. The State reimburses the City \$3,000 per dwelling unit constructed under the zoning, up to a cap set by the legislation.

The relevant zoning text and design guidelines for the proposed DSGO district will be provided in *Appendix H: Proposed Text for Zoning Changes*.

## LANDSCAPE ORDINANCE

The City has an existing Landscape Ordinance for projects that are required to undergo Site Plan Review (Article XIII). This section applies to the following:

- New and expanded parking lots
- Multi-family developments

The ordinance requires two trees per dwelling unit, however, planting trees on site within the urban renewal area may not be feasible in all cases due to limited site area for planting and in the case of some larger mill properties, conditions imposed by the use of historic tax credits.

The LRA proposes to amend *Section 29-50, Alternative Methods of Compliance* to require that applicants who are subject to Article XIII, but cannot meet its requirements on-site, deposit the cost of the trees that would have been planted, plus three years of maintenance costs, into a Tree Trust that can be used to plant trees throughout the City.

The Office of Planning and Development will determine the amount to be paid into the fund, based on the requirements of Article XIII in terms of number of trees and caliper. The Tree Trust will be managed by the City of Lawrence Office of Planning and Development in accordance with an annual tree-planting plan established by staff in the Planning Department and Department of Public Works. Funds may also be used to support a City nursery for growing replacement trees.

## PLANNED INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

The LRA is proposing a zoning change to the Merrimack Street Corridor that will encourage food manufacturing and production, specialty manufacturing (such as textiles and medical devices), and other light industrial uses. The *Merrimack Street Land Use Planning Study* suggested the creation of a Planned Industrial Development District (PIDD). This PIDD would replace the I-2 District along Merrimack Street

within the urban renewal area. The proposed zoning suggests changes in uses and dimensional standards that will support businesses in the target industries who wish to relocate in this area to take advantage of the access to I-495 and the center of the City.

The purpose of this district, as stated in the proposed text for the zoning change, is as follows:

*To control the design, development, renovation and redevelopment of the Merrimack Street Corridor within the LawrenceTBD Urban Renewal District, consistent with the Plan's overall vision and goals including the development of facilities for Food Manufacturing and Production, Specialty Manufacturing, Health Care and Medical Facilities.*

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## 1.6 Urban Design Characteristics

As part of the analysis of existing conditions within the urban renewal area, the consultant team evaluated the current conditions related to standard measures of urban design along both Essex Street and the Merrimack Street Corridor. These observations and recommended strategies are incorporated into recommended design guidelines as part of the regulatory requirements of this Urban Renewal Plan (*Section 3 Objectives*) and as part of the design guidelines the proposed 40R District and PIDD.

The City's Planning Board will use the recommended design principles and guidelines to review proposals within the urban renewal area that are subject to Site Plan Approval and ensure the proposed development is consistent with the desired aesthetic qualities for each area.

### ESSEX STREET: ASSETS

Essex Street is the primary retail street in the historic downtown area and contains a number of attractive older buildings that date back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Existing assets relative to the urban design of Essex Street and the surrounding grid of streets include the following:

- Historic district character
- Historic mills and commercial buildings from the late 1800s
- Distinctive image and good quality brick masonry
- Good examples of façade and storefront renovation
- Brick sidewalks and brick paving accents
- Wide sidewalks and streetscape improvements (along Essex Street)
- Well established street trees

### MERRIMACK STREET CORRIDOR: ASSETS

A similar design analysis was undertaken for the Merrimack Street Corridor. The scale of the parcels and buildings in this area is larger than those on Essex Street and the surrounding area. Such characteristics require different design treatments from the Essex Street area.

Existing assets relative to the urban design along Merrimack Street include the following:

- Historic mills dating back to the late 1800s, some of which have been renovated
- Distinctive image and good quality brick masonry
- Significant historic design character (although the area is not recognized as a historic district)
- Brick as predominant material in old mill buildings
- Good examples of mill renovation (Monarch Lofts, New Balance)

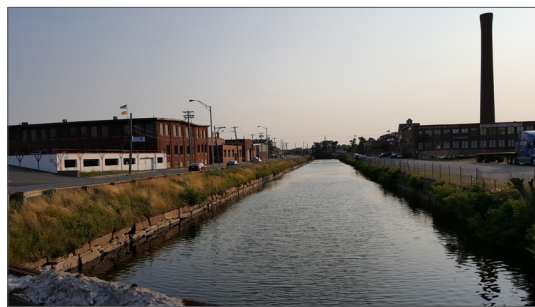
- Opportunities for redevelopment (underutilized buildings, vacant sites, brownfields)
- Ongoing streetscape improvement projects
- South Canal as a significant landscape feature with potential for passive and active recreation
- Gateway into the city from I-495

## PROBLEMS

Both areas have significant challenges relative to the quality of the urban design area. The tables on the next two pages identify the existing conditions relative to urban design for both Essex Street (Table 1-2) and the Merrimack Street Corridor (Table 1-3).

The tables also propose a possible solution to each condition and the related design principle that would govern the solution during the Site Plan Approval process.





*Figure 1-11: Photographs of Essex Street (left) and Merrimack Street Corridor and South Canal (above and right)*

PHOTOGRAPHS: THE CECIL GROUP/HARRIMAN



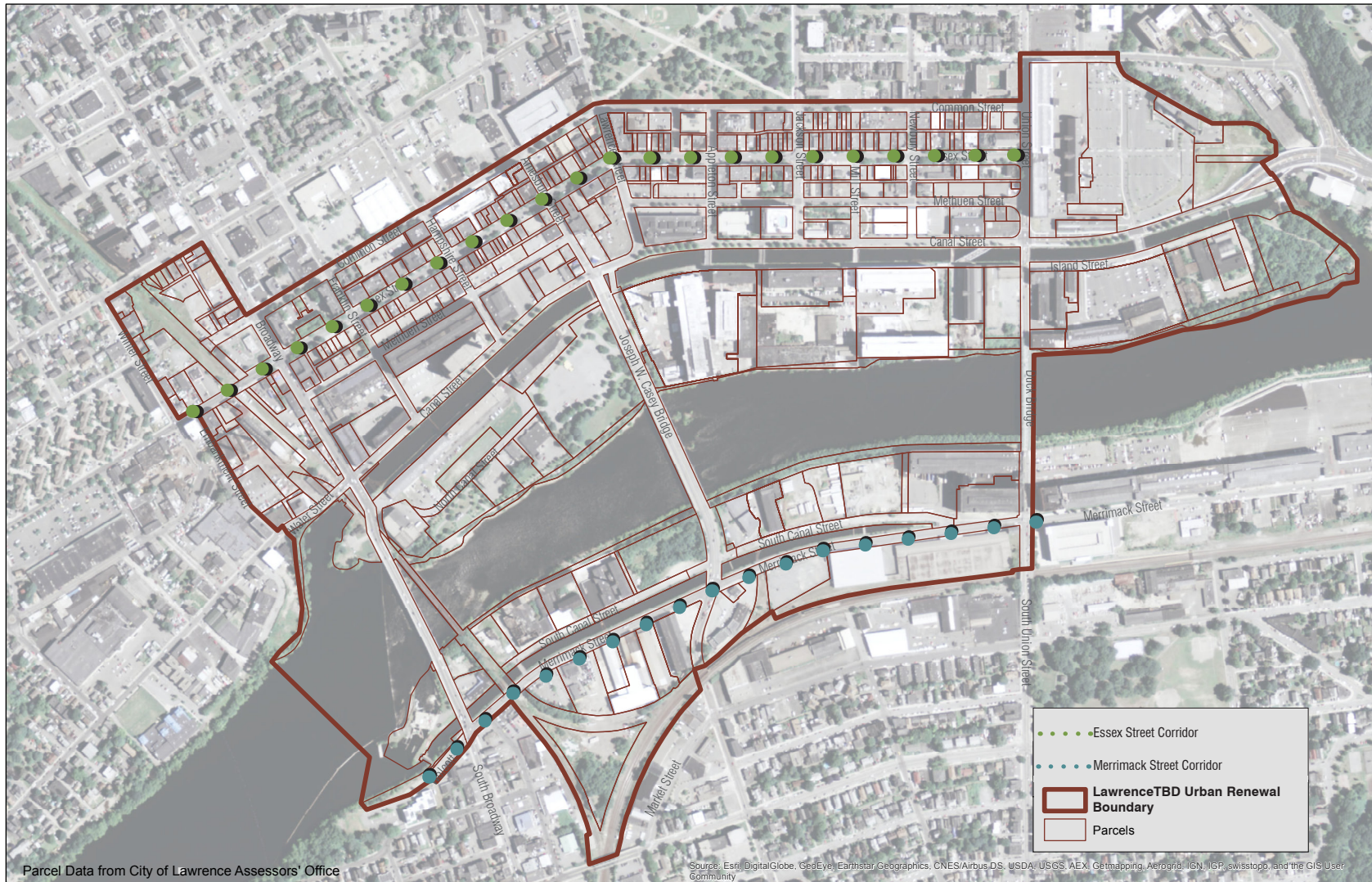


Figure 1-12: Analysis of Design Elements for Essex Street (green) and the Merrimack Street Corridor (blue)

Table 1-2: Urban Design Conditions, Solutions, and Principles for Essex Street

EXISTING CONDITIONS: ESSEX STREET	
Old buildings in the downtown exhibit metal or wooden panels covering historic façade elements and details to the detriment of the overall historic design character of the district.	
Multiple buildings exhibit painted or exposed brick walls in need of renovation and repair.	
Some buildings present old and deteriorated storefronts, some of which lack in architectural quality; others appear to have been updated years ago with a loss of historic design character.	
Some commercial buildings have large wall signs or very long awnings that cover their main façade and architectural design features.	
Some buildings exhibit multiple signs randomly placed on the façade.	
Window air conditioning units are visible from the street in some buildings, air conditioning units hang over some store entrance doors, air exhaust vents sometimes open to the main façade; these detract from the overall design composition and appearance of the building and the quality of the street environment.	
Many commercial buildings and storefronts are equipped with rolling metal doors and shutters that are directly visible from the street.	
Some large buildings present long blank walls along the street.	
100% asphalt paved parking lots, sometimes defined by chain link fencing, contribute to runoff generation and heat islands in the summer, while detracting from the image of the downtown if not designed properly or maintained regularly.	
Narrow sidewalks in need of repair, lack of streetscape improvements west of Amesbury Street, and unkempt trees that reduce walking space (e.g. parts of Canal Street) may be perceived as obstacles to the redevelopment and revitalization of certain areas.	
Views dominated by parking lots, billboards and one-story automotive buildings characterize the image at the entrance to the downtown on Lawrence Street; traffic on Methuen Street is rerouted between Lawrence and Amesbury Streets, affecting the connectivity between east and west destinations within the urban renewal area.	
Large billboards on building rooftops, side elevations, and parking lots dominate the views from some public vantage points, creating a perception of visual clutter and disarray, and detracting from the overall image and design character.	



	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RECOMMENDED GUIDELINE
	Preserve the original architectural character and design features of historic buildings by repairing them or replacing them with similar elements and materials; avoid covering and hiding distinctive details and design features.	Preserve the original architectural character and design features of historic buildings.
	Clean and repoint old brick walls and elevations to restore their original quality; if sealing or painting is required, use finishes and colors consistent with the building and the district historic character (e.g. Secretary of Interior's standards and guidelines for historic preservation).	Clean and repair old brick walls to restore original quality.
	Provide guidelines and technical and financial assistance for the renovation of old building façades and storefronts in ways consistent with the historic design character and the architectural quality of representative buildings within the downtown.	Renovate building façades and storefronts in ways consistent with historic design character.
	Establish zones for the location of signs on the front of the building that fit within the main compositional elements and proportions of the façade (e.g. sign bands, awnings, fitting between vertical elements such as columns or pilasters, and other determined locations on the building façade).	Establish zones for the location of signs on the building façade.
	Coordinate sign design, type and location in order to avoid redundancy and visual cluttering.	Coordinate sign design, type, and location to avoid visual cluttering.
	Consolidate HVAC systems throughout the building to integrate and optimize the use of energy, and place equipment units on the rooftop, away or screened from public view; if consolidation is not possible, design the façade or storefront to conceal appliances from public vantage points.	Consolidate mechanical equipment away or screened from public view.
	Place roll up security doors and shutters behind the storefront, or design storefronts to conceal rolling security screens within architectural design elements such as soffits or encasements.	Place roll-up security screens behind the storefront or conceal them in the architecture.
	Articulate building façades with window openings that allow for visibility and transparency between the exterior and the interior, or create landscape buffers that mitigate the impact of blank walls on the sidewalk and moderate exterior temperature and wind.	Articulate building elevations with windows at the street level or landscaping.
	Provide guidelines for the design and landscaping of parking edges, in order to promote the creation of landscape buffers that screen the view of parked vehicles from the street, introduce design amenities such as fences, benches or trees, and contribute to enhance the pedestrian environment.	Landscape parking lot edges to enhance the pedestrian environment.
	Improve maintenance and upkeep of sidewalks and the pruning and maintenance of existing street trees; add extensions to widen stretches of sidewalk that prevent universal access according to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.	Improve sidewalks to provide universal access (ADA).
	Redesign roads to improve access and connectivity; use the opportunity to create distinctive and attractive north-south design gateways into the downtown area.	Improve access and connectivity while creating design gateways into the downtown.
	Work with property owners and advertising companies to remove some of these billboards and improve the overall image and design character of the downtown.	Work with property owners to remove billboards that detract from the overall image and design character.

Table 1-3: Urban Design Conditions, Solutions, and Principles for the Merrimack Street Corridor

EXISTING CONDITIONS: MERRIMACK STREET CORRIDOR	
Old mill buildings that strongly contribute with their scale and architectural presence to the overall historic design character of the corridor are at risk of grave deterioration or loss due to age and lack of maintenance.	
Vacant and underutilized sites along the Merrimack Street corridor, and particularly along South Canal Street, detract from the economic vitality, safety, and image perception of the area.	
Visible discrepancies in building placement, massing, scale, and proportions between the old mills and new commercial development contribute to convey the perception of a disjointed and incoherent public realm.	
Buildings present multiple wall signs or big signs covering large portions of their façade, especially in places visible from the highway.	
Some buildings exhibit multiple signs randomly placed on the façade, generating visual clutter and confusion.	
Window air conditioning units and rooftop mechanical units detract from the overall design composition and appearance of the building when seen from the street or from the distance.	
Some large buildings present long blank walls along the street.	
100% asphalt paved parking lots, sometimes defined by chain link fencing, and lack of vegetation contribute to generate runoff and 'heat islands' in the summer, while detracting from quality of the pedestrian environment along the Corridor.	
Narrow sidewalks in need of repair, lack of sidewalks at some locations, lack of streetscape improvements along parts of the corridor, and overhead utilities take away from the quality of the walking experience, and may be perceived as obstacles to redevelopment and revitalization.	

	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINE
	Preserve the original architectural character and design features of existing historic buildings by repairing them or replacing them with similar elements and materials.	Preserve the architectural character and design features of historic buildings.
	Promote the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized sites to attract innovative industries and emerging technologies that will generate a new image and perception for the future of Lawrence.	Promote the use of building technologies, materials and methods reflective of contemporary design and innovative architectural expression in the design of new buildings.
	Establish design standards and guidelines that promote harmonious relationships of placement, massing, scale, and proportion among neighboring buildings, aimed at generating a more coherent public realm independently of the particular design style and expression of each building.	Promote harmonious relationships of placement, massing, scale and proportion among neighboring buildings, independently of their particular design style and expression.
	Establish zones for the location of signs on building elevations in places that are complementary to the main compositional elements and proportions of the façade (e.g. sign bands, awnings, fitting between vertical elements such as columns or pilasters, and other determined locations on the building façade).	Establish zones for the location of signs on the building façade.
	Coordinate sign design, type, and location within a building façade in order to avoid redundancy and cluttering of competing information, while promoting a harmonious relationship between signage and architectural design elements.	Coordinate sign design, type and location to avoid visual cluttering.
	Consolidate HVAC systems throughout the building to integrate and optimize the use of energy and place equipment units on the rooftop (away or screened from public view); if consolidation is not possible, design the façade or storefront to conceal appliances from public vantage points.	Consolidate mechanical equipment away or screened from public view.
	Articulate building façades with window openings that allow for visibility and transparency between the exterior and the interior, or create landscape buffers that mitigate the impact of blank walls on the sidewalk and moderate exterior temperature and wind.	Articulate building elevations with windows at the street level or landscaping.
	Provide guidelines for the design and landscaping of parking edges in order to promote the creation of green areas and landscape buffers that screen the view of parked vehicles from the street; introduce design amenities such as sitting areas, fences, benches, or trees; and enhance the pedestrian environment.	Create green areas and landscape parking lot edges to enhance the pedestrian environment.
	Improve maintenance and upkeep of sidewalks and existing trees; build sidewalks in places where they are missing, and add extensions to widen stretches of sidewalk that prevent universal access according to ADA standards.	Improve sidewalks to provide universal access (ADA).







**For me, Lawrence is...  
Para mí, Lawrence es...**

Home  
Beautiful  
Rich in its organizations, institutions  
and businesses that are willing  
to collaborate and understand  
the value of partnership.  
A hard city that battles a bad  
reputation  
A place of opportunity!  
A place with "hidden" gems

**in 2025, will be...  
en el 2025, será...**

A place people will  
want to come to,  
invest in,  
raise families,  
make music,  
make art  
A place that fully utilized  
opportunity with citizen  
input to implement the  
vision of those citizens  
and the many great  
partners.

**LawrenceTBD**

## **2. ELIGIBILITY**

## 2 760 CMR 12.02 (2): Eligibility

### 2.1 Findings

Under Chapter 121B, Section 48, DHCD must be able to make certain findings with respect to this redevelopment plan. These findings, and their applicability to the plan, are summarized in the table to the right.

The supporting information for each of these findings is presented in the remainder of this section. Supporting technical memoranda are provided in the Appendices.

These findings are related to the conditions of the urban renewal area relative to the need to invoke the intervention of a redevelopment authority under the enabling legislation. This section will provide evidence that this urban renewal area is a decadent area, that the activities proposed by this plan are justified by the conditions, and that the recommendations of this plan are consistent with previous planning efforts at the local, regional and state levels.

The conditions required by Chapter 121B are known as conditions of blight. The common understanding of blight includes conditions such as broken or boarded-up windows, a lack of maintenance such as peeling paint or unmowed lawns.

The legislative definition of blight is provided in *Section 2.2 Determination of Conditions: Decadent Area*. For the purposes of an urban renewal plan, blight is defined as those conditions that cannot be addressed by the private market alone – in other words, public assistance is needed to help address those conditions.

The origins of urban renewal lay in large projects, funded by the federal government, in the middle part of the 1900s. These projects cleared large areas of land, demolishing buildings and relocating people from what were seen as overcrowded and inadequate housing units. In many communities, this type of clearance did not welcome or even involve public input.

Instead, municipalities made the planning decisions and undertook the clearance themselves.

Today's focus is on creating incentives for the private market to invest. These incentives can include changes to the regulatory environment, investments in public infrastructure, and/or help with financing.

The purpose of this plan is to identify the current conditions that prevent such private investment, determine the needs and goals of the smaller community of this area and the impact they expect for the larger community as a whole, and define those actions that will create incentives for the private market, over time, to address the existing conditions.

This urban renewal area is a Decadent Area, as defined by Chapter 121B. The content of this section supports this finding with evidence that meets the requirements of Chapter 121B and 760 CMR 12.00, the regulatory requirements of the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).



REQUIREMENTS OF CHAPTER 121B, SECTION 48	APPLICABILITY TO THE AREA	RELEVANT SECTION
(a) the project area would not by private enterprise alone and without either government subsidy or the exercise of governmental powers be made available for urban renewal.	The private market is unable to fully address the conditions that lead to a finding of a decadent area.	Section 2.2 <i>Determination of Conditions: Decadent Area</i>
(b) the proposed land uses and building requirements in the project area will afford maximum opportunity to privately finance urban renewal consistent with the sound needs of the locality as a whole.	The proposed zoning changes and public infrastructure improvements provide incentives for the private market to invest in the urban renewal area.	<i>Executive Summary and Implementation Plan</i> and Section 3 <i>Objectives</i>
(c) the financial plan is sound.	The financial plan provides estimates for the projects that are expected to be undertaken within the first five years after the approval of this plan. The plan indicates additional funding strategies for projects anticipated in later phases.	Section 4 <i>Financial Plan</i>
(d) the project area is a decadent, substandard or blighted open area.	The project area is a Decadent Area.	Section 2.2 <i>Determination of Conditions: Decadent Area</i>
(e) that the urban renewal plan is sufficiently complete, as required by section one.	This Urban Renewal Plan (1) conforms to the previous planning efforts conducted by the municipality, and (2) indicates the boundaries of the area, the anticipated land acquisition and rehabilitation of structures; the proposed public improvements; and zoning and other planning changes, including proposed land uses, maximum densities, and building requirements. The plan <b>does not</b> include a relocation plan as there is no anticipated project that would render existing dwelling units business units as temporarily or permanently uninhabitable.	1) Sections 2.4-2.6 2) <i>Executive Summary and Implementation Plan</i> ; Section 1 <i>Characteristics</i> ; and Section 3 <i>Objectives</i> 3) Section 6.6 760 CMR 12.02 (8) <i>Relocation</i>
(f) the relocation plan has been approved under chapter seventy-nine A.	This plan does not include a relocation plan as there is no anticipated project that would displace existing dwelling or business units.	Section 6.6 760 CMR 12.02 (8) <i>Relocation</i>

Table 2-1: Findings Required by DHCD

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## 2.2 Determination of Conditions: Decadent Area

As noted above, this urban renewal area is a Decadent Area, as defined by Chapter 121B, Section 1:

### DEFINITION OF A DECADENT AREA

...an area which is detrimental to safety, health, morals, welfare or sound growth of a community because of the existence of buildings which are out of repair, physically deteriorated, unfit for human habitation, or obsolete, or in need of major maintenance or repair, or because much of the real estate in recent years has been sold or taken for nonpayment of taxes or upon foreclosure of mortgages, or because buildings have been torn down and not replaced and under existing conditions it is improbable that the buildings will be

replaced, or because of a substantial change in business or economic conditions, or because of inadequate light, air, or open space, or because of excessive land coverage or because diversity of ownership, irregular lot sizes or obsolete street patterns make it improbable that the area will be redeveloped by the ordinary operations of private enterprise, or by reason of any combination of the foregoing conditions.

### APPLICATION OF THE DEFINITION

Table 2-2 breaks this definition apart and demonstrates how the existing conditions within the urban renewal area prevent the private market from addressing those conditions. The remainder of this section provides the evidence to support these conclusions.

The determination that this urban renewal area is a decadent area rests on three sets of conditions present within the boundary:

- The physical conditions of the area, including site conditions, such as flood plains and the presence of environmental contaminants; infrastructure, both public and private; and building conditions, including historic building styles and development patterns
- The demographics as those demographics are related to both the housing market and the job market
- The economic trends and market conditions that encourage or discourage investment within the urban renewal area

CONDITIONS OF A DECADENT AREA	APPLICABILITY TO THE AREA	SECTION
Existence of buildings which are out of repair, physically deteriorated, unfit for human habitation, or obsolete	Partially applicable: The existence of brownfield sites within the area meet this requirement.	<i>Building and Site Conditions</i>
Existence of buildings which are in need of major maintenance or repair	Partially applicable: Some buildings have been rehabilitated. Both larger mill buildings and smaller downtown buildings either need major repair or have been repaired with materials or techniques that are inappropriate to the type or age of the building.	<i>Building and Site Conditions</i>
Much of the real estate in recent years has been sold or taken for nonpayment of taxes or upon foreclosure of mortgages	Partially applicable: Properties with significant tax liens exist throughout the urban renewal area.	<i>Economic Development and Real Estate Market Conditions and Trends</i>
Buildings have been torn down and not replaced and under existing conditions it is improbable that the buildings will be replaced	Not applicable: The urban fabric is relatively intact. A few buildings have been demolished and not yet replaced (e.g. 372 Essex Street). However, there is a threat to the existing historic fabric from inappropriate repairs or modifications and demolition and replacement over time.	<i>Building and Site Conditions</i>
Substantial change in business or economic conditions	Applicable: Recent investments in the mill buildings have not been replicated in the downtown area. The focus of these investments has been directed more towards housing than to job creation. Critical industries need support to flourish.	<i>Demographics Economic Development and Real Estate Market Conditions and Trends</i>
Inadequate light, air, or open space	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Excessive land coverage	Partially applicable: The majority of parcels have existing buildings. Many “vacant” parcels are either dedicated parkland or not buildable.	<i>Building and Site Conditions</i>
Diversity of ownership, irregular lot sizes or obsolete street patterns make it improbable that the area will be redeveloped	Partially applicable: The area north of North Canal is a regular grid and most of the lots are small and regular. South of North Canal the lots are larger and more irregular. The ownership is diverse, as is typical of a downtown area; such diversity can make parcel assembly difficult.	<i>Building and Site Conditions</i>

Table 2-2: Applicability of the Definition of Decadent Area to the Existing Conditions



## BUILDING AND SITE CONDITIONS

Chapter 121B and 760 CMR 12.00 do not require that every condition of a Decadent Area be met, or that each parcel within an urban renewal area meet one or more of the conditions. However, the decadent conditions must exist to such an extent that the ability of the private market to develop is impacted by conditions beyond its control.

This section will evaluate the requirements for a decadent area primarily in terms of the area as a whole rather than in terms of individual buildings or sites. The specific conditions are as follows:

- Brownfields
- Flood plain
- Infrastructure
- Land coverage
- Building age
- Building condition

## Brownfields

The presence of brownfields in an area that had a significant industrial history is not unexpected. Such sites require additional assistance to address conditions that may have been discovered long after the original use has ended. The former Merrimac Paper mill is undergoing environmental remediation at an initial cost of about \$2 million; more funds will be needed to restore this site to a state at which it can be redeveloped.

Figure 2-1 identifies known brownfields within the urban renewal area. The source of this information is two databases: the City's own inventory (red dots) and a database maintained by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). The blue dots represent an RAO Class of A2 and A3 status in Phase III, IV, or V. A2 means that a permanent solution has been achieved, but the contaminant has not been reduced to background. A3 is the same as A2 but with an Activity and

Use Limitation (AUL) attached to the site. The website for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) notes that the RAO classifications have been phased out as of 2014. Sites in Phase III are under assessment and development of the clean up plan is developed. Sites in Phase IV are in the process of being cleaned up and sites in Phase V are being treated and monitored.\*

As part of the preparation of an urban renewal plan, the LRA must file an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) with the MassDEP. As part of the research for that filing, the consultant team identified additional sites based on the data provided by the Massachusetts Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS). The map in Figure 2-1A shows the AUL sites listed in the MassGIS databases of November 2016. AUL is a Site and Activity Use Limitation; such a limitation has an impact on the permitted land uses on any site with an open AUL. The

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\* <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/cleanup/sites/definitions-of-fields-listed-in-search-result.html>, last accessed October 14, 2016

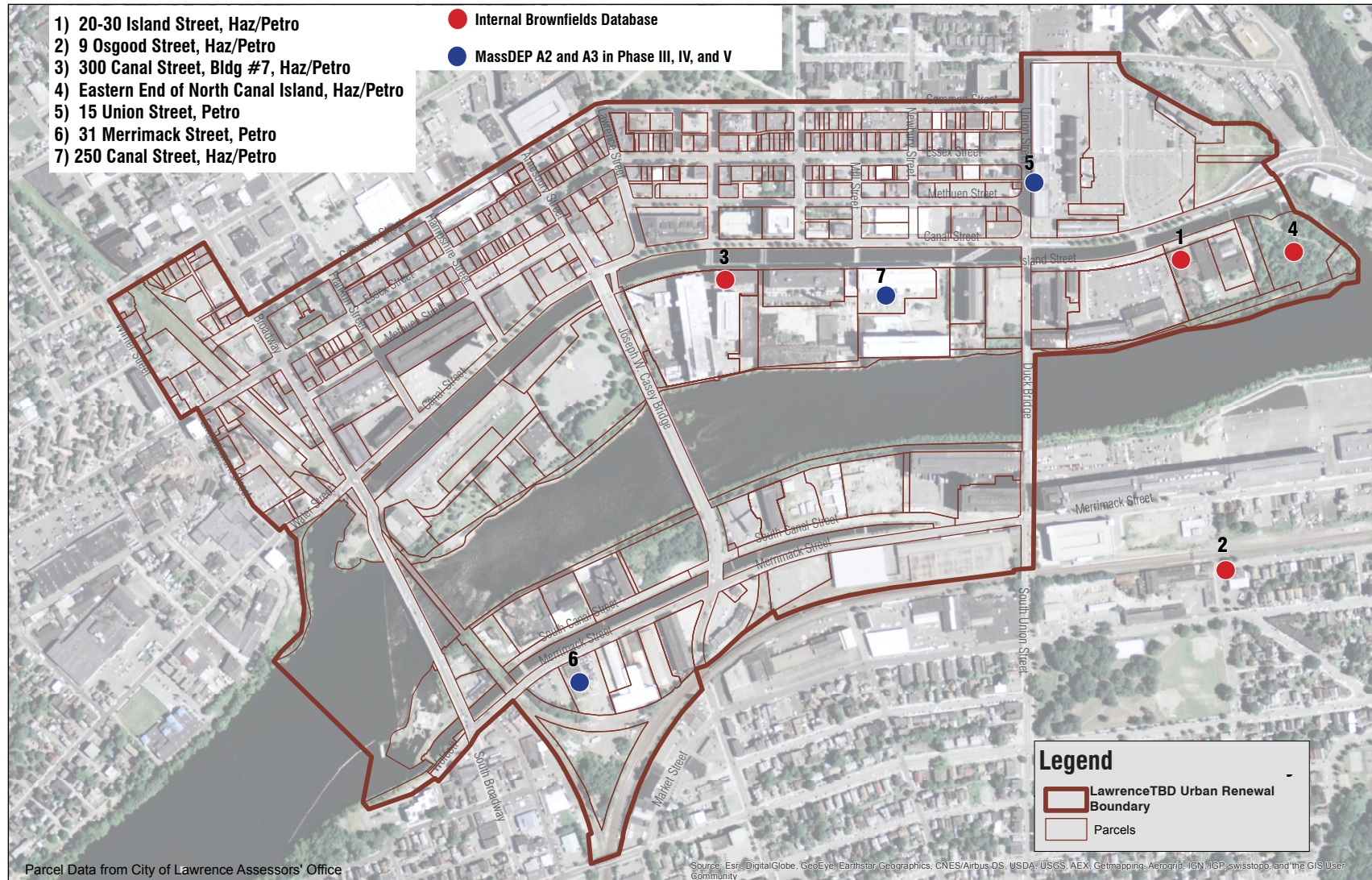


Figure 2-1: Identified Brownfields in the Urban Renewal Area



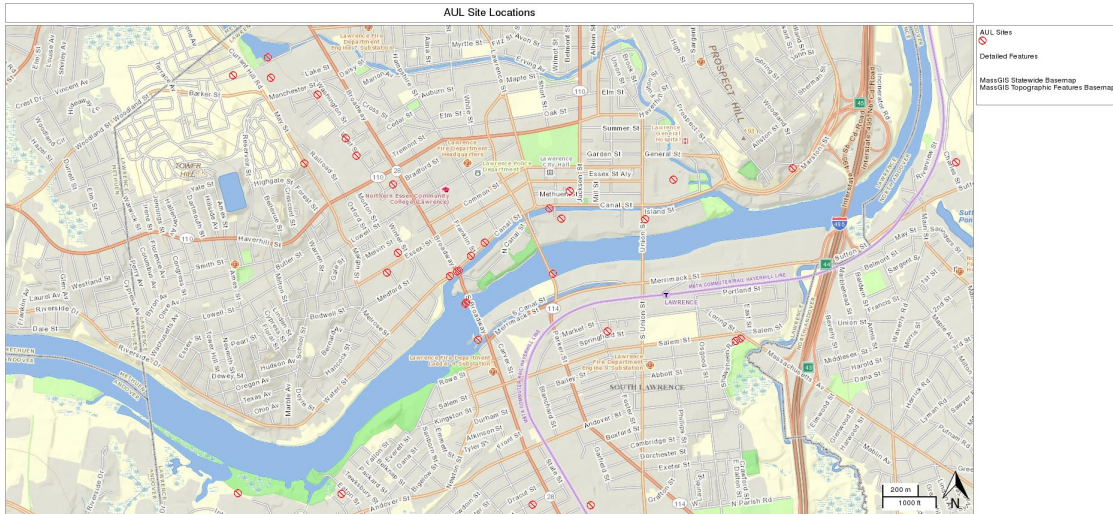


Figure 2-1A: Identified AUL sites within and in proximity to the Urban Renewal Area

SOURCE: MASSGIS, LAST ACCESSED NOVEMBER 30, 2016

research for the ENF identified several active AULs, including the following:

- 10 Carver Street
- 9 South Canal Street
- South Canal Street
- 430 North Canal Street
- 444 Canal Street
- 454 North Canal Street
- Parcel 12 – Pemberton Park Canal Street Casey Bridge
- Building 1 – 250 Canal Street
- 250 Canal Street
- 600 Essex Street
- 2 Mill Street
- 50 Island Street
- 21 Canal Street
- 195 Lowell Street
- 10 Embankment Street

The following sites are classified as Open Sites with a status of Tier I or Tier II under M.G.L.c. 21E according to the Massachusetts GIS data layers:

- 39 South Canal Street (Tier I)

- 300 Canal Street (Tier I)
- 11-17 Merrimack Street (Tier II)
- 9 South Canal Street (Tier II)
- 300 Canal Street (Tier II)
- 70 General Street (Tier II)

## Flood Plain

### SNAPSHOT: FLOOD PLAIN

WITHIN THE FLOOD PLAIN	NUMBER	ASSESSED VALUE
Properties	103	\$66.4 m
Buildings	42	\$48.6 m

The Merrimack River is one of the twenty-seven major river basins in Massachusetts. *The Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation Report* (September 2011, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the Adoption Advisory Committee) identifies the threats to such systems from climate change, including threats to the forests within the floodplains, re-

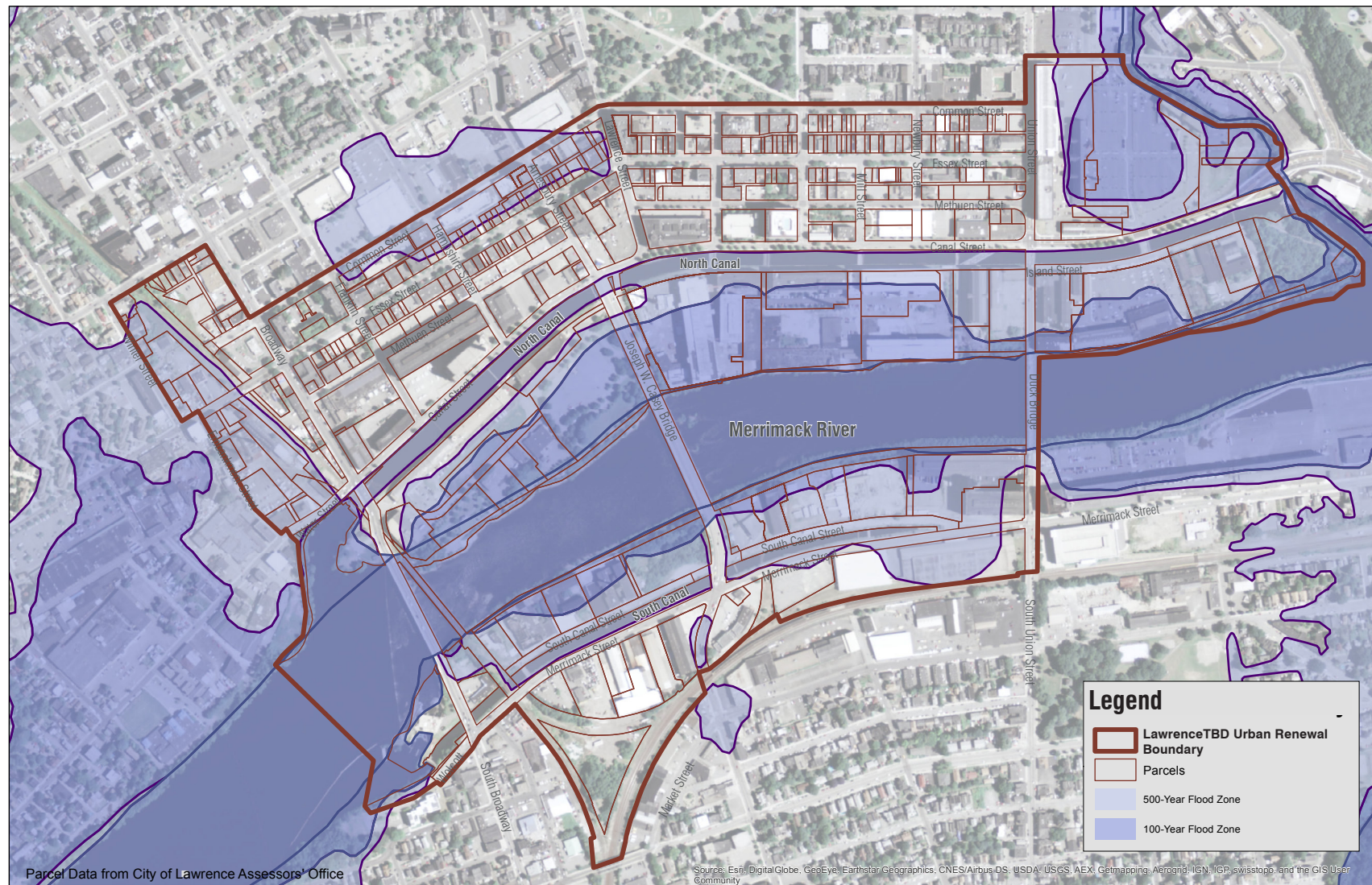


Figure 2-2: Flood Zones in the Urban Renewal Area. The chance of flooding is 1% for a 100-year flood zone and 0.2% for the 500-year flood zone.



duced flows during projected summer droughts, and increased flows during winter floods.\* The report projects that drier, hotter summers will reduce the quality of the water and that warmer, wetter winters may increase stormwater runoff from rain and shift the timing and impact of flood events.\*

Although the focus of the climate adaptation report is on the ecological habitat, the impacts will also be felt on the built environment, including buildings and infrastructure. Figure 2-2 indicates the parcels within the flood plains; these are at risk not just from the initial floodwater but from flood-induced blight as a result of damage to buildings, sites, and infrastructure.

Flood damage to the Merrimack River includes an increased flow of pollutants from stormwater runoff and debris from receding floodwaters. The Merrimack River is already an impaired class B river (see notes under *Infrastructure*, be-

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\* Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the Adoption Advisory Committee, Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation Report, September 2011, pages 41-42



PHOTO BY ANGIE BEAULIEU/EAGLE-TRIBUNE

Governor Romney and Lt. Governor Healey in Pemberton Park, May 16, 2006 after the Mother's Day Flood ([http://www.eagletribune.com/photos-mother-s-day-flood/collection\\_7529f65e-13c0-11e6-ade5-4369c6154e1e.html#6](http://www.eagletribune.com/photos-mother-s-day-flood/collection_7529f65e-13c0-11e6-ade5-4369c6154e1e.html#6))

low). Additional pollutants can affect the ability of the river to be used for fishing, boating, or swimming, and thus impact the public use of and direct access to the river from the bordering parks, such as Pemberton Park.

The Mother's Day Flood of 2006 caused significant damage in the urban renewal area and throughout the Merrimack River watershed area. A video from Canal Street shows the floodwaters on May 15, 2006 ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqhV\\_Rnw3uM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqhV_Rnw3uM)) and the same area – Pemberton Park – is shown in the photograph above.

The Mother's Day Flood was an extreme example in which fifteen inches of rain fell in three days. However, the City and potential developers should be aware of the floodplain boundaries. Building renovations, innovative implementation of Chapter 91 public access requirements, and improvements to public and private stormwater managements systems can have a positive impact on the existing conditions in the floodplain and throughout the urban renewal area.

## Infrastructure

### Stormwater System

According to the Merrimack River Watershed Association (MRWA), the Merrimack River is classified as B waters, but in Massachusetts, the condition of the river is “non-supporting” for that classification.\* Class B waters may be used for fishing, boating, and swimming. Non-supporting indicates that the water quality is not at a level that is appropriate for those uses.

The MRW identifies pathogens from Combined Sewer Overflows, including those of the Greater Lawrence Sanitary District, as a major threat to the quality of the water.\* Secondary threats include impervious surfaces (which increase stormwater runoff) and climate change (and the predicted increase in the severity of storm events and precipitation).

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\*<http://www.merrimack.org/web/improve-water-quality-and-quantity/>, last accessed November 22, 2016

The City of Lawrence entered into a Consent Decree with the U.S. Department of Justice in April 2015. The City’s stormwater system had illegally discharged untreated stormwater and sewage into the Merrimack River.

The City has a Combined Sewer System, managed by the Greater Lawrence Sanitary District, in some areas. This type of system can overflow during storm events if the system cannot handle both stormwater and wastewater. Other backups can occur when the sewage system is clogged by grease or debris, or when a pipe collapses. The Consent Decree required the City to establish a schedule to manage the stormwater system, including improvements to the stormwater infrastructure and a reduction in points of contamination, including run-off from development projects.

The Consent Decree notes that improvements to the stormwater system and reduction in the discharge would improve both the water quality and the quality of life for residents. Improvements to the water quality of the Merrimack

River would enhance potential uses at an expanded Pemberton Park, including fishing, kayaking, and other uses that require direct contact with the water.

## North and South Canals

### SNAPSHOT: CANALS

	LENGTH IN LINEAR FEET
North Canal	5,284
South Canal	3,423
Total	8,707

ABUTTING THE CANALS	NUMBER	ASSESSED VALUE
Properties		
North Canal	47	\$51.5 m
South Canal	37	\$22.3 m
Total	84	\$77.4 m
Buildings		
North Canal	27	\$44.6 m
South Canal	24	\$13.6 m
Total	51	\$58.2 m

When in a state of disrepair, private infrastructure, such as the North and South Canals, can contribute to future blighted conditions. Alternatively, if restored and maintained, these canals

can become major assets that help physically knit the historic downtown with the historic mill district.

In 1996, Preservation Massachusetts added the North and South Canals to their list of Massachusetts' Most Endangered Historic Resources. These resources are identified as those that are "pertinent to individual town character and sense of place.\*"

*The North Canal Restoration and Enhancement Study* by Groundwork Lawrence (April 2005) identifies a number of capital investments necessary to rehabilitate both of the canals and the connecting areas. Some of these projects have already been completed; others, such as the following, still need to be addressed:

- **Canal Bridges:** The nine bridges that span the canals represent varying building techniques and are in varying stages of disrepair

Both the cost of repairs and questions about ownership have prevented investments, and some of the bridges were – in 2005 – already in a significant state of disrepair

- **Canal Walls:** The study describes the walls of the canals as being in good condition – except where a collapse had occurred – but noted that the growth of weeds and brush within the drylaid stone created conditions that could cause structural instability over time
- **Canal Bed:** In the past, significant amounts of trash and debris have been removed from the canal bed but it is unlikely that all of the debris have been removed
- **Head Gates and Penstocks, Raceways, and Spillways:** These elements of the canals are critical to the proper functioning of the historic power-generating system. As of 2005, The Essex Company had planned repairs to the spillway. Joint action between the Essex Company and individual owners allowed repairs to some of the raceways in 2005. The Head Gates and Penstocks were in poor condition in 2005

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\* <http://www.preservationmass.org/archive>, last accessed October 12, 2016



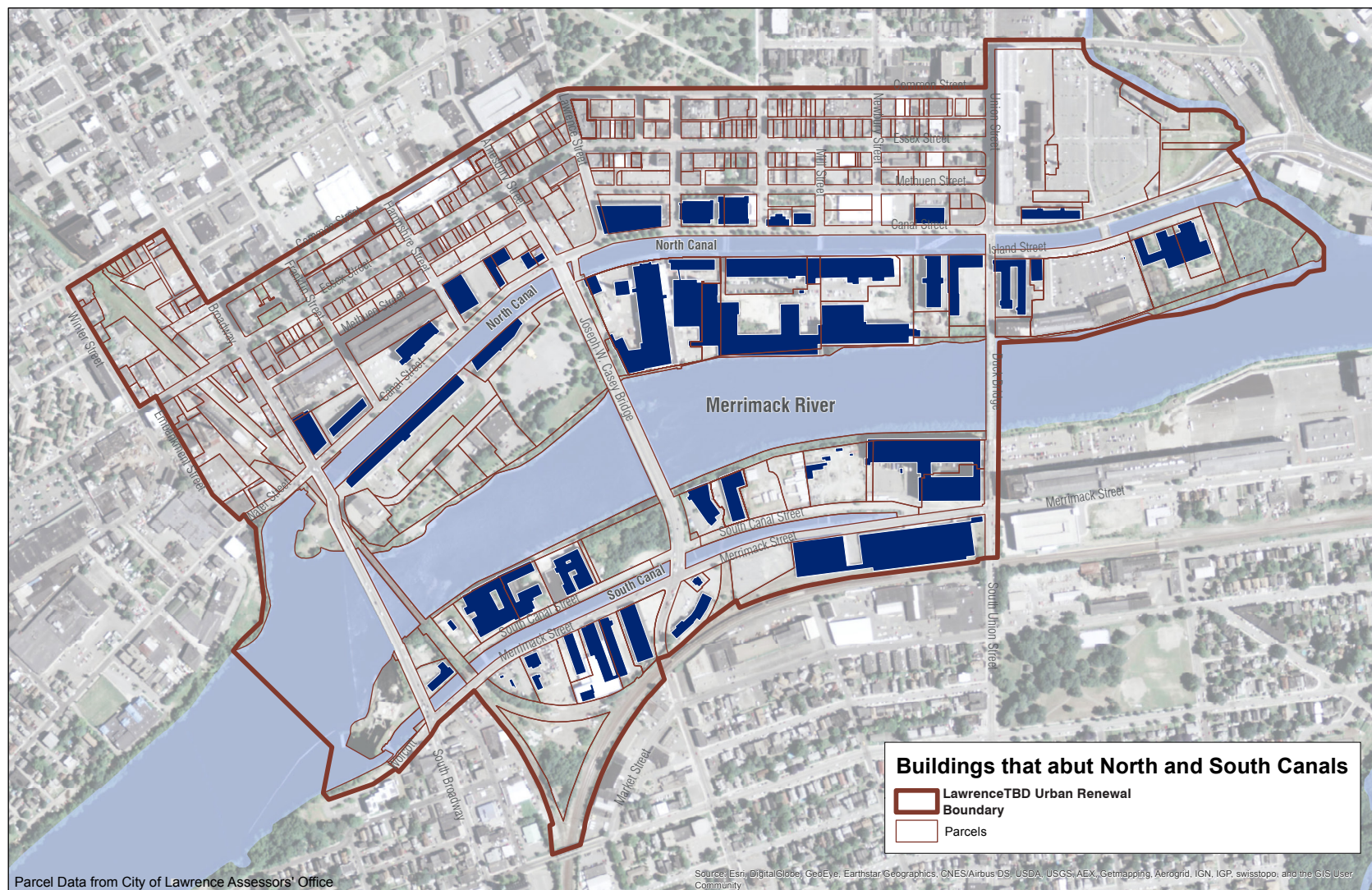


Figure 2-3: Buildings that Abut North and South Canals

This study also calls for parks at each end of the canals connected by a walking trail. The eastern end, Ferrous Site Park (Figure 1-11), has been completed. The study suggests a second park at the western end, around the North Canal Gatehouse. The Gatehouse was also mentioned at one of the public forums as an opportunity to exhibit information about the Merrimack River, the Great Stone Dam, and the impact of the canal structure on the history of Lawrence. The proposed North Canal/South Canal walking loop (Figure E-6) could be expanded to connect these two parks; however, the condition of the canal walls would need to be evaluated and addressed prior to additional investments adjacent to the walls.

## Streets and Sidewalks

When in poor condition, the streets and abutting sidewalks can create a disincentive to the private market to invest in properties that border such infrastructure. The City has made a number of efforts to address the streetscape along Essex Street and Merrimack Street, but

more work needs to be done to address current conditions.

In recent years, The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) has made the following investments in the urban renewal area:

- **O’Leary Bridge (Broadway/Route 28):** \$10.3 million (Project 604749)
- **Amesbury Street Bridge over North Canal:** \$3 million (Project 602304)
- **Duck Bridge:** \$19.9 million (Project 135259)

Pedestrian improvements at Union Crossing (Project 607471) are under construction and represent a further investment of \$761,000.

Although the Route 495/Marston Street interchange is not within the urban renewal area, the \$35.7 million spent on the complete reconstruction of that interchange (Project 66961) had a dramatic impact on the primary gateway from the highway (and thus the connection to

Boston and New Hampshire) and the urban renewal area. The first stage of the improvements to the Merrimack Street Corridor are also just outside the urban renewal area; this project was funded by a \$3.9 million grant from the State’s MassWorks program.

This plan supports the MassWorks grant application for the remainder of the streetscape improvements to Merrimack Street (from Union Street to Broadway). This plan also identifies the Amesbury Street corridor as a significant part of the urban renewal area; this corridor was the subject of a recent \$10 million TIGER grant application which was denied. The TIGER grant application included converting Amesbury Street to a two-way street between Canal and Lowell Streets, to improve traffic flow for both vehicles and pedestrians.

The City has made improvements (paving, sidewalks, street furniture) to the streetscape along Essex Street; these should be extended throughout the grid north of the North Canal.

## Land Coverage

### SNAPSHOT: LAND COVERAGE

	NUMBER	ACRES	% OF TOTAL
Parcels	385	364.3	
Acres of Unbuildable Land			
Merrimack River and Canals		51.15	14.0%
Unbuildable (Rights-of Way, Parks, Other Vacant)		22.22	6.1%
Roads		66.44	18.2%
<b>Total Buildable Land (Acres)</b>		224.49	61.7%
			<b>% OF TOTAL BUILDABLE ACRES</b>
Total Buildings	375		
Footprint (Estimated)		66.35	29.6%
Buildable Vacant Land (Estimated)		8.49	3.8%

Land coverage is the amount of land that is occupied by a building or by impervious paving, such as a parking lot or a driveway.

The amount of land coverage differs within defined areas of the overall urban renewal area. The grid bounded by Common Street, Union Street, Canal Street and Broadway has different characteristics when compared with the rest of the urban renewal area. Within this grid, the majority of the area is covered by buildings, parking, or roads (Figure 1-3).

Significant land coverage in a downtown area such as Essex Street and the surrounding area is expected. The amount of land coverage becomes problematic for a downtown area when the land is devoted to surface parking lots at the expense of more dense development. Lots whose surface is primarily covered by a building also present problems. Such lots often cannot support sufficient on-site parking to meet current parking requirements. In order to develop such lots, additional parking must be provided



on an adjacent lot or within a reasonable walking distance.

Surface parking that is not properly maintained or lit can contribute to a perception of an unsafe environment and detract both visually and economically from an area. Surface lots that do not manage stormwater on site can place pressure on the City's stormwater infrastructure. Both of these conditions exist within the urban renewal area, although some lots are lit and landscaped.

## Building Age

### SNAPSHOT: BUILDING AGE

	NUMBER	% OF TOTAL
Total Buildings	375	100%
Buildings Pre-1978	351	93.6%
Buildings Pre-1951	275	73.3%
Buildings Post-1950	100	26.67%

As discussed in *Demographics*, below, buildings built prior to 1978 (when lead paint was phased out) have a high likelihood of lead paint. Buildings built prior to 1980 (when asbestos was phased out) may still have asbestos. While one such building would have a small impact on an area, a preponderance of older buildings may indicate the possibility of substandard conditions. While this is less critical for commercial buildings than for dwelling units with children under the age of six, the desire to convert the

upper floors of existing buildings to residential may trigger the need to remediate the existing environmental conditions, thus increasing the cost of construction. Figure 2-4 identifies those buildings in the urban renewal area that are listed in the Assessors' database as built prior to 1978.

A second critical factor related to building age is the number of historic buildings within this planned community. An analysis of the development pattern show that the pace of building activities slowed significantly after the 1950s (after the mills began to close – see Figure 2-5). Much of the older building stock has historic significance in terms of both architectural styles and in how the buildings contribute to the overall urban fabric. Where the original urban renewal plans demolished these buildings, subsequent efforts to preserve historic buildings derive from an appreciation of how those buildings contribute to a community's sense of its history and identity. The risk to the historic fabric of Essex Street and the surrounding streets comes from

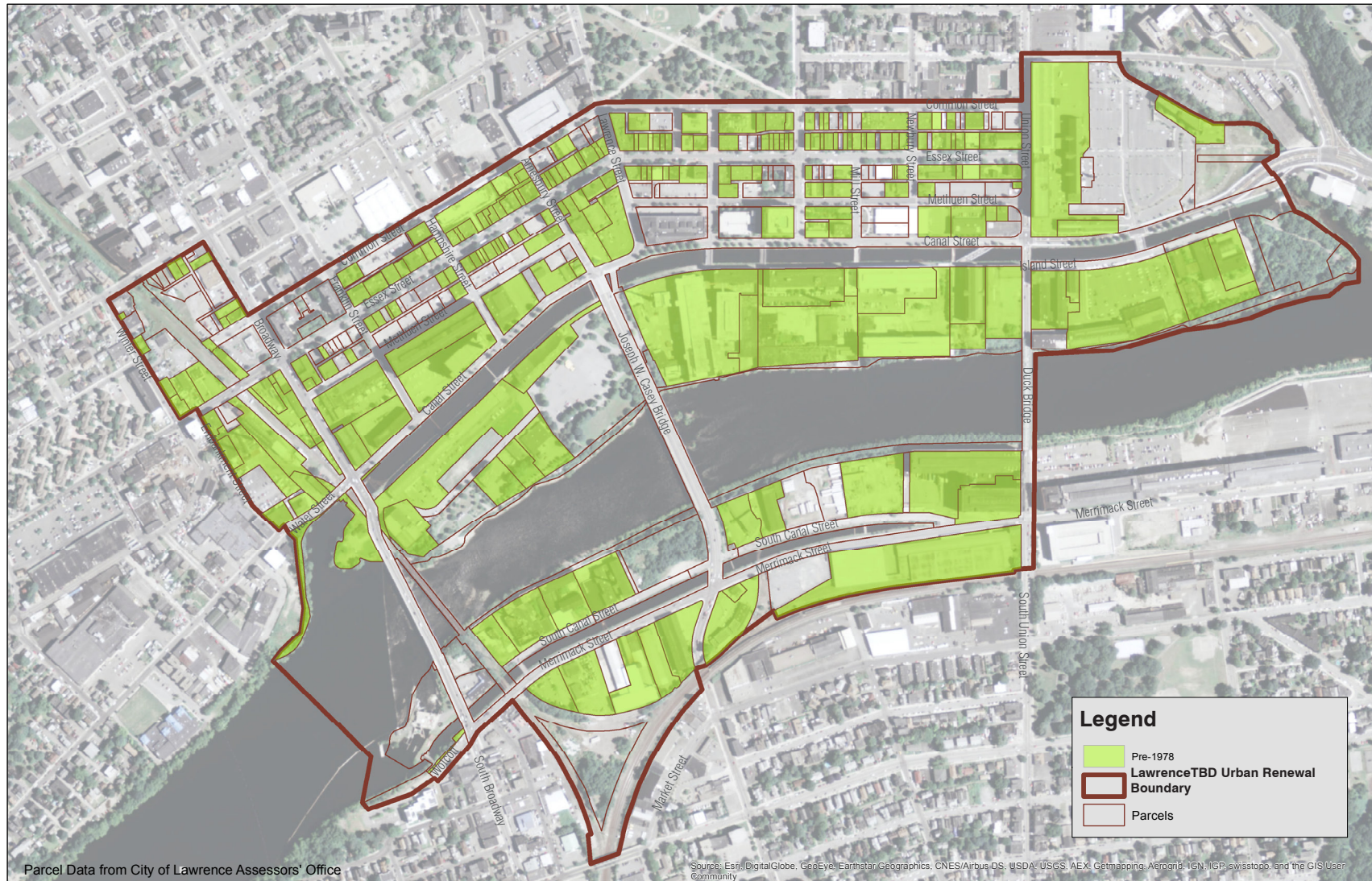


Figure 2-4: Buildings Built Prior to 1978

the possibility that property owners will allow their buildings to deteriorate and either repair them with inappropriate methods and materials or demolish them, replacing them with new buildings not appropriate to the context. The value of Essex Street as a draw to residents and visitors alike lies in both retaining and enhancing the underlying historic context while allowing for a mix of uses – residential, retail, restaurant, and cultural – that create a vibrant downtown.

## Building Condition

Five members of the Citizens Advisory Committee – Lynne Brown, Spencer Buchholz, Jonathon Nix, Dick Russell and Kiriza Zihahirwa – Kristen Harol, Chair of the LRA, and a volunteer from City staff, Laiza St. Onge, assisted with the preparation of the Parcel Inventory provided in *Appendix J: Parcel Inventory*. Their assistance was a significant contribution to the development of this Urban Renewal Plan and the documentation of the existing conditions. The survey team felt that, in general, the exterior of the buildings they inventoried did not significantly contribute to conditions of blight (few needed major exterior repairs) but that many of the buildings they visually inspected could use upgrades, minor repairs, and other investment from their owners.

The condition of the buildings range from mill buildings that have been renovated for housing, industrial, or commercial uses, to buildings on Essex Street that have active ground floor uses

but vacant upper floors, to sites such as brown-fields, including the Merrimac Paper site, that require significant remediation before development can occur.

The private market cannot address those buildings that are underutilized for three reasons:

- Existing floor plates are not suitable for some light industrial uses, such as food production, that require modern, climate-controlled buildings with open spans, high ceilings, loading docks, and truck access
- The housing market does not provide sufficient incentive to invest in smaller, older buildings as the cost to bring those buildings to code (elevators, sprinklers, ADA access) can be prohibitive under current market conditions
- The presence of hazardous materials that increase the cost of development beyond the ability of the private market to address such conditions



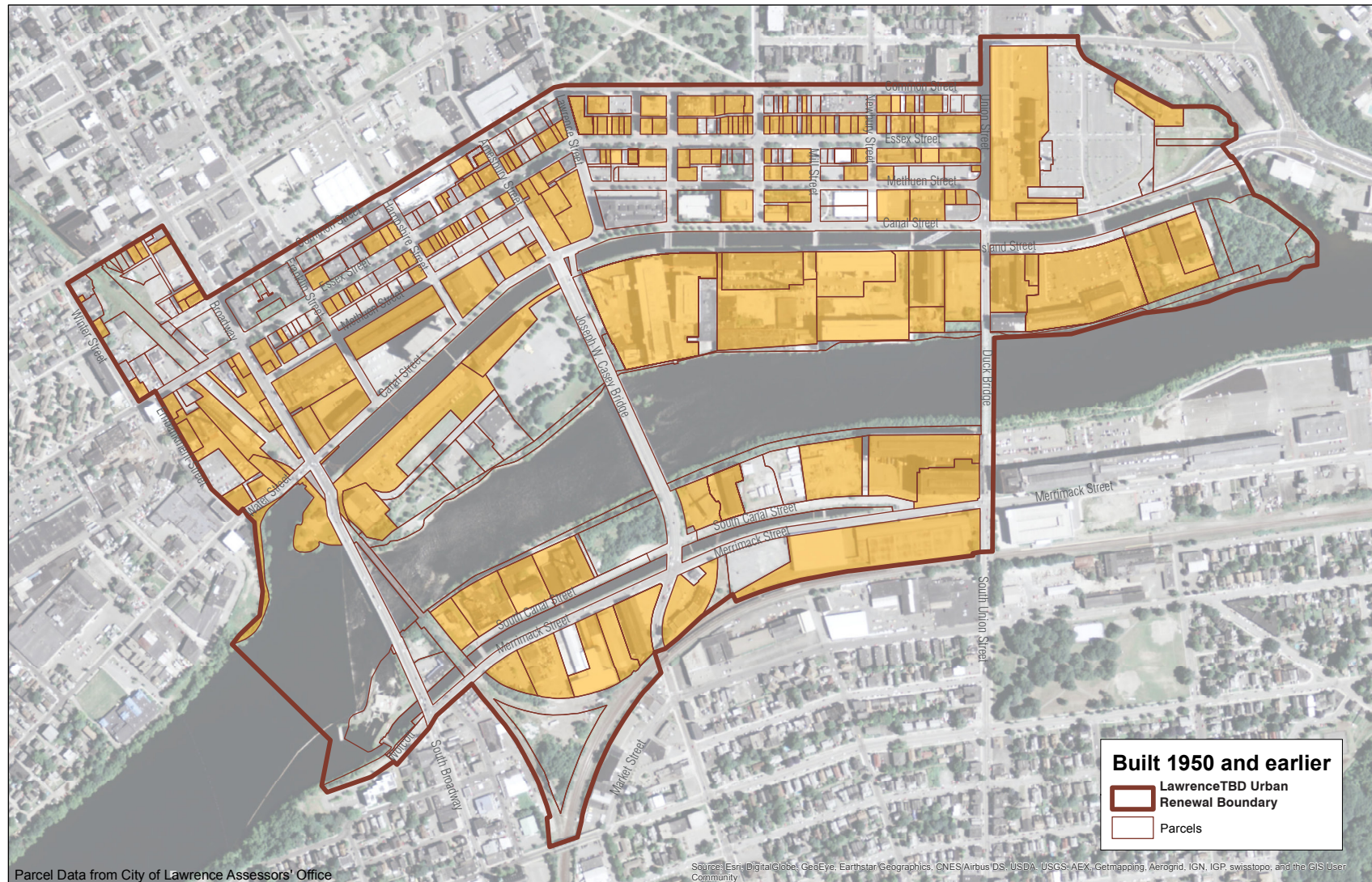


Figure 2-5: Buildings Built 1950 and Earlier

## DEMOGRAPHICS

The *City of Lawrence Comprehensive Housing Study*, which was completed in August 2015, undertook a demographic analysis of the City in comparison to Essex County and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and also in comparison to other Gateway Cities. The tables are provided in the Appendices in the *Comprehensive Housing Study*.

The planning process for this Urban Renewal Plan did not repeat that analysis, but draws upon it to identify certain demographic trends with relevance to this plan. In order to understand the demographic factors that affect the determination of a decadent area, it is important to understand their relationship to the underlying business and/or economic conditions.

For the purpose of this Urban Renewal Plan, the critical conclusion from the analysis in the *Comprehensive Housing Study* is that in 2012, 47.4% Lawrence residents spent more than 35% of their income on housing. This is a com-

bination of two factors: the low median household income and the high demand for housing in the area.

### High Population Density

The population of Lawrence increased by 7.3% from 2000-2012, significantly higher than the growth rate of 4.5% for Essex County and 4.7% for Massachusetts as a whole. This growth occurred in a city with a 2012 population density of 11,046 people per square mile of land area. Of the six comparable cities identified by the *Comprehensive Housing Study*, only Chelsea had a higher density (14,598 people per square mile). New Bedford, Framingham, Lynn, Methuen, and Salem had densities that were significantly lower.

	POPULATION DENSITY (PEOPLE PER SQUARE MILE)
<b>Lawrence</b>	<b>11,046</b>
Chelsea	14,598
Framingham	2,629
Lynn	2,422
Methuen	2,069
New Bedford	6,759
Salem	3,934
Essex County	1,509
Massachusetts	848

*Source of Data: City of Lawrence Comprehensive Housing Study, August 2015 (Karen Sunnarborg Consulting, Charleen Regan Consulting, Abacus Architects + Planners) Appendix 3.*

## Overcrowding

In 2012, just under a third of the population lived in nonfamily households (those in which the inhabitants are not related), and just under a quarter of the households were single-person. The average household size in 2012 was 2.99 people – higher than the County (2.60), the State (2.54), and all six comparative cities. This higher average household size lived in smaller units: in 2012, the median number of rooms in Lawrence was 4.9, lower than the County (5.6), the State (5.6), and five of the six comparable communities. Only Chelsea had a smaller number of rooms (4.5).

Lawrence has made progress in terms of overcrowding. In 2012, the percentage of units that had 1.51 or more occupants per room was 2.0%, a decrease from the 2000 rate of 4.2%. However, the percentage for Essex County was 0.5% in 2012, the percentage for the State was 0.6%, and only Chelsea had a higher percentage at 5.1% of units.

	AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE (PERSONS)	2012 MEDIAN NUMBER OF ROOMS	PERCENTAGE OF ROOMS WITH 1.5 OCCUPANTS OR MORE
<b>Lawrence</b>	<b>2.99</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
Chelsea	2.96	4.5	5.1%
Framingham	2.46	5.5	1.0%
Lynn	2.81	4.9	0.9%
Methuen	2.64	5.7	0.7%
New Bedford	2.34	5.2	0.75%
Salem	2.22	4.8	0.6%
Essex County	2.60	5.6	0.5%
Massachusetts	2.54	5.6	0.6%

*Source of Data: City of Lawrence Comprehensive Housing Study, August 2015 (Karen Sunnarborg Consulting, Charleen Regan Consulting, Abacus Architects + Planners) Appendix 3.*



## Demand

The 2012 vacancy rate for housing in Lawrence was 3.8%, down from the 4.4% vacancy rate in 2000. By comparison, the 2012 vacancy rate for Essex County was 7.5% and for the State was 10.2%. Framingham was the only city with a lower 2012 vacancy rate, at 3.1%.

The growth rate for housing in Lawrence was 3.5% from 2000-2012, lower than the rate for Essex County (6.8%), the State (7.2%), and four out of the six other cities. Only Lynn (3.4%) and Framingham (3.0%) were lower.

## Effect of Demographics on Demand

The low vacancy rate and the low growth rate for housing, coupled with the higher growth rate for the City's population, has generated significant demand that is putting upward pressure on housing prices. At the same time, median household income in Lawrence fell from \$41,034 in 1999 to \$32,851 in 2013. As a re-

	2012 VACANCY RATE	2000-2012 POPULATION GROWTH	2000-2012 HOUSING GROWTH	2012 MEDIAN MONTHLY GROSS RENT
<b>Lawrence</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>\$995</b>
Chelsea	8.1%	2.8%	5.2%	\$1,114
Framingham	3.1%	3.7%	3.0%	\$1,080
Lynn	9.9%	2.5%	3.4%	\$645
Methuen	4.8%	8.9%	11.2%	\$919
New Bedford	10.0%	1.4%	6.3%	\$731
Salem	7.9%	4.0%	8.4%	\$1,066
Essex County	7.5%	4.5%	6.8%	\$1,040
Massachusetts	10.2%	4.7%	7.2%	\$1,036

*Source of Data: City of Lawrence Comprehensive Housing Study, August 2015 (Karen Sunnarborg Consulting, Charleen Regan Consulting, Abacus Architects + Planners) Appendix 3.*

sult, a majority of Lawrence households (58%) in 2013 spent more than 30% of their income on housing, while 32% of households spent more than 50% of their income on housing\*.

The standard ratio for determining housing affordability is that housing costs (rent/mortgage, utilities, property taxes) should not exceed 30% of household income. Although the ratio of monthly income to monthly rentals cannot be calculated (only monthly rental amounts are available), Law-

\* MAPC <http://www.housing.ma/lawrence/report>, last accessed October 13, 2016

rence's median monthly gross rent of \$995 in 2012 is comparable to that of Essex County (\$1,040) and the State (\$1,036) and is at the upper end of the range for the other six cities.

## Housing Age

The age of the housing stock is an important consideration as age is sometimes an indicator of the condition or standard of the available units. In 2012, 56% of the housing units in Lawrence were built prior to 1940. Only Chelsea (66.5%), Lynn (66.8%), and Salem (56.6%) have a higher percentage of older units. As noted in the discussion on building and site conditions above, buildings built prior to 1978 have a higher likelihood of lead paint on woodwork within the house.

## Impact on the Urban Renewal Area

The demographic information indicates that the high demand for housing places enough

pressure on the market to drive the rents and purchase prices above the level that many residents can afford given the lower incomes of Lawrence residents.

The vision and goals of this Urban Renewal Plan focus on economic development and job creation, but the underlying goal is that this focus will lead to higher wages that can address the lack of affordability and overcrowding - Lawrence residents earning higher wages will be able to afford better housing stock, providing incentives for the private market to invest in both new housing units and upgrading older ones.

However, input from the public process indicated that additional incentives were needed to address some of the concerns around housing in the short term. Three proposed actions address the condition and availability of housing:

1. The proposed 40R district, which would increase the percentage of affordable housing required as part of large multifamily or mixed-use developments, while creating

stronger control over the character and quality of development through the proposed design guidelines for the district;

2. The dedication of 40R incentive payments from the State to the City's First Time Homebuyer Assistance Program, which supports low and moderate income families to purchase homes in neighborhoods throughout Lawrence; and
3. The proposed Essex Street National Register Historic District, which would provide additional financing options for property owners to upgrade their buildings to a certain standard in exchange for federal and state tax credits. Access to these credits should help offset the costs of creating new housing in underutilized or vacant upper floor space on Essex Street.

## Environmental Justice Communities

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts defines an Environmental Justice Population as one that “suffer[s] from a disproportionately high share of environmental burdens and at the same time lack environmental assets in their neighborhoods.”\*

To be considered an Environmental Justice (EJ) population, the neighborhood (defined as a U.S. Census Bureau census block group) must meet one or more of the following criteria:\*

- Median annual household income is at or below 65% of the statewide median income
- 25% or more of the residents are a minority
- 25% or more of the residents are foreign born
- 25% or more of the residents are lacking English language proficiency

\* [http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart\\_growth\\_toolkit/pages/mod-ej.html](http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/pages/mod-ej.html), last accessed November 25, 2016

	EJ CRITERIA	MEAN EJ CRITERIA IN BLOCK GROUPS	POPULATION 2010	PERCENT OF POPULATION IN EJ BLOCK GROUPS
<b>Lawrence</b>	<b>MIE</b>	<b>2.27</b>	<b>76,377</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Chelsea	MIE	2.00	35,177	100.0%
Framingham	MIE	1.65	68,318	47.6%
Lynn	MIE	1.75	90,329	80.7%
Methuen	MIE	1.40	47,255	37.0%
New Bedford	MIE	1.81	95,072	69.6%
Salem	MIE	1.89	41,340	31.4%

Source of Data: EJ\_2010\_municipal\_stats.xls; Executive Office of Administration and Finance, Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), <http://www.mass.gov/anf/research-and-tech/it-serv-and-support/application-serv/office-of-geographic-information-massgis/datalayers/cen2010ej.html>, last accessed November 25, 2016.



MassGIS provides a table of the 2010 Environmental Justice Populations, based on the 2010 U.S. Census. The information in the table to the left was extracted from that data. Lawrence is compared to the same cities used in the *Comprehensive Housing Study* and has the highest mean EJ criteria with a mean of 2.27 criteria across all 55 of the block groups in the City.

The map to the right shows that the majority of the urban renewal area is defined as Minority, Income, and English Isolation (MIE: dark blue) with a subarea defined as Minority and Income (MI: dark green). This information is based on the 2000 U.S. Census and was provided by the MassGIS data online viewer, accessed on November 25, 2016.

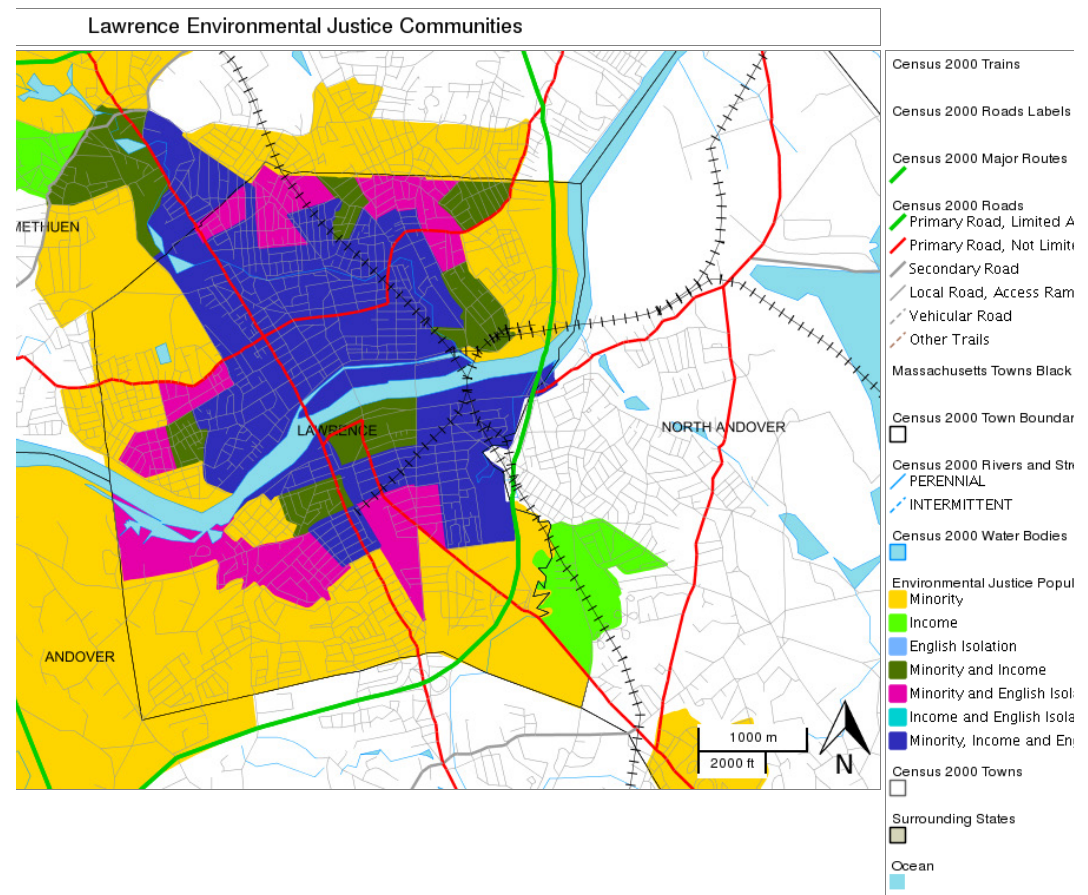


Figure 2-6: Environmental Justice Communities within the City of Lawrence

## ECONOMIC AND MARKET CONDITIONS

The designation of much of the urban renewal area as a Growth District at the state level is an indication of both the need for public assistance to help revitalize this area and the willingness of the State to assist.

The prevalence of tax liens on properties in the area is a sign of an inability to pay the taxes or the unwillingness to invest further in underperforming assets.

The loss of long-term local businesses such as Polartec and Lawrence Pumps is a blow to a City that seeks to support and expand its business community. A study of the economic trends and real estate market conditions indicates a strong potential for growth in certain industries – provided the City and the LRA can capture that potential for growth with incentives that attract employers and enhance business expansion at all scales of the local economy.

### Canal District Revitalization Area

The Canal District Revitalization Area (Figure 2-7) is designated as a Growth District by the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED). This is part of the Growth Districts Initiative, a program at the state level that seeks to expedite permitting for commercial and residential development.

In order to be eligible, the area must be “development ready” with a plan for future development that spans five to twenty years.\*

EOHED has specific requirements for Growth Districts, including a focus on job and housing opportunities, the reuse of previously developed land, the availability of transit, and consideration of low-impact development. A Growth District is intended to act as a catalyst to further development in a city.

The information provided by the EOHED (see Figure 2-7) indicates an anticipated build-out of \$8.5 million square feet of commercial and 3,000 new housing units. The figure is undated and does not contain additional information to support the build-out estimate.

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\* <http://www.mass.gov/hed/economic/eohed/pro/gdi/growth-districts.html>, last accessed November 25, 2016

## GROWTH DISTRICTS INITIATIVE

District Name:	Lawrence Canal District Revitalization Area Growth District
Municipality:	Lawrence
Site Boundaries:	The district is bounded on the north by Common Street and General Street, on the East by Prospect Street/Marston Street and Interstate 495, on the south by the Haverhill Commuter rail right of way and on the west by Broadway, the O'Leary Bridge and the Great Stone Dam Land Area: 21,150,000 sq. ft.
Land Area (acres):	Area: 21,150,000 sq. ft = 485.54 acres
Anticipated Build-Out:	8.5M sq. ft. commercial (est.) 3,000 new housing units (est.)

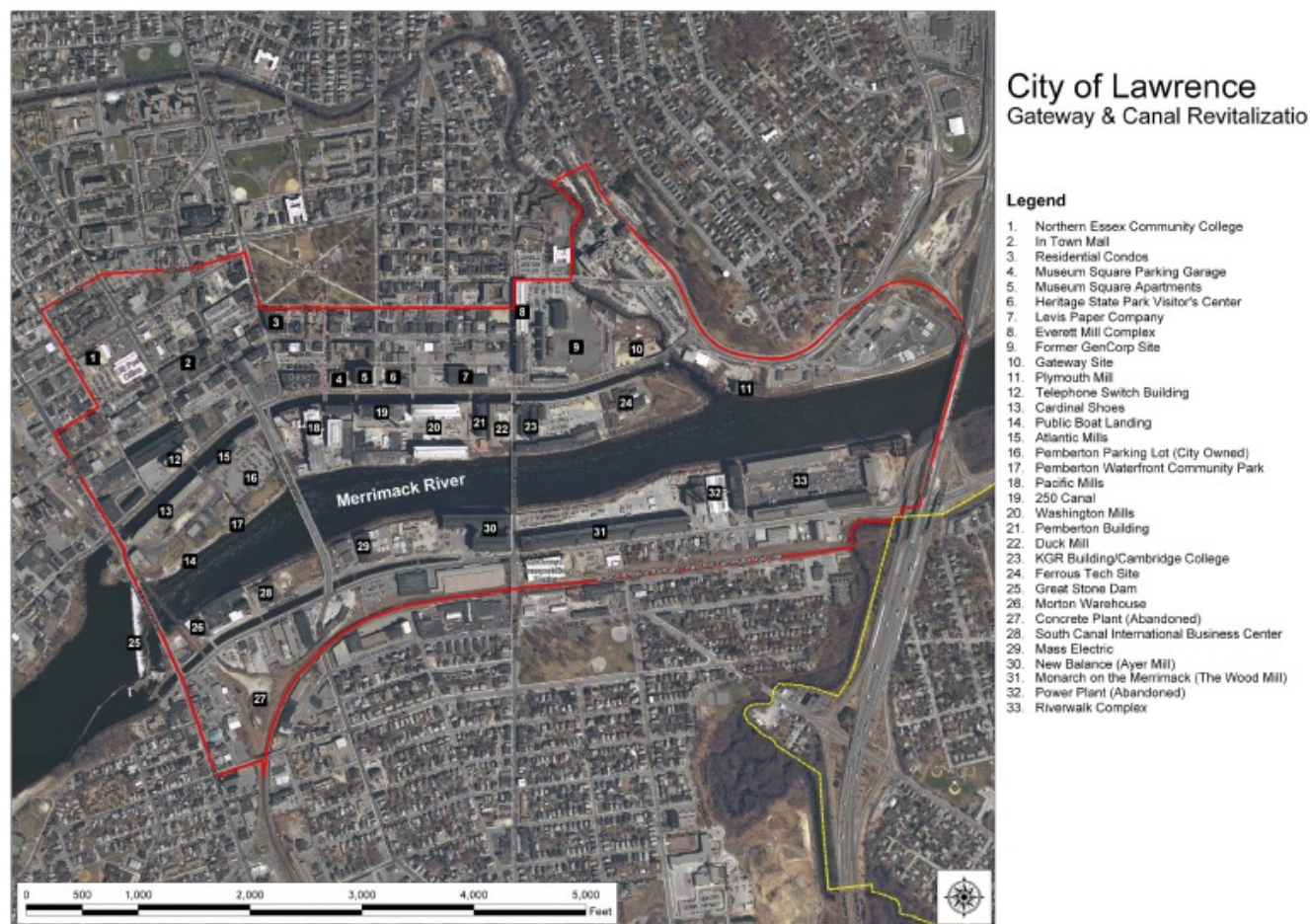


Figure 2-7: Canal District Revitalization Area (Source: Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development)



## Tax Liens

Properties within the urban renewal area that have tax liens against them are shown in Figure 2-8. Only those properties with tax liens that are over two years old and that are not condominium properties were included in this map. The total value of the tax liens shown is approximately \$7.8 million; the value of the properties is approximately \$4.3 million. (See Figure 1-9C in *Section 1 Characteristics*.) The preponderance of these sites throughout the urban renewal area hint at the economic and market conditions that affect the property owner's inability or unwillingness to pay the real estate taxes on a property.

The loss of tax revenue affects the municipal budget and limits the resources available for code enforcement, public safety, and street maintenance, which can affect the perception of blighted conditions in an area.

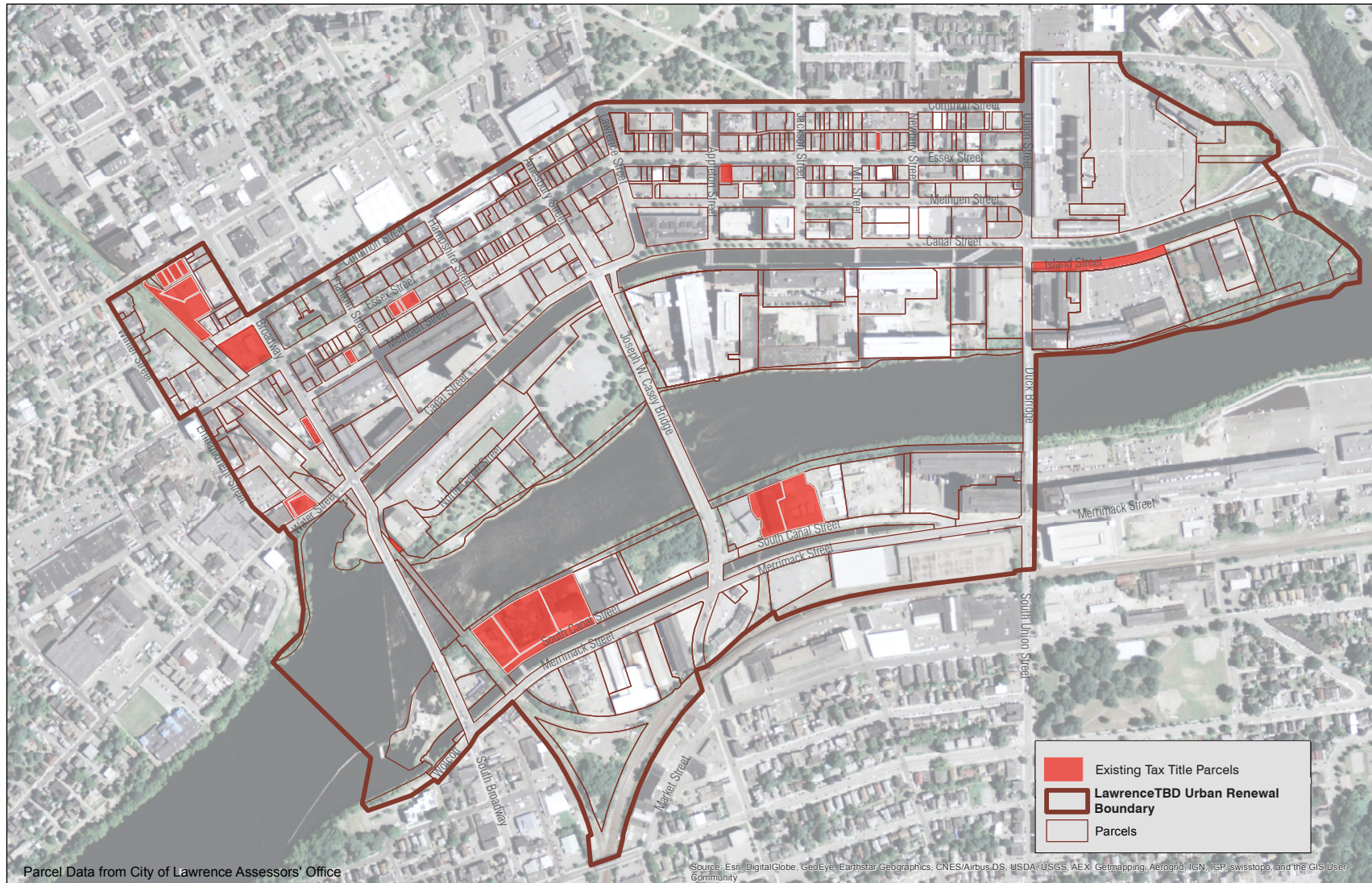


Figure 2-8: Tax Liens Older than Two Years

## REAL ESTATE MARKET CONDITIONS AND TRENDS; IMPLICATIONS

The complete technical reports from the consultant team are provided in *Appendix B: Economic Development and Real Estate Market Conditions and Trends* and *Appendix C: Feasibility Analysis for a Lawrence 40R Overlay District and 370 Essex Street*.

The findings have been summarized in the Executive Summary. The focus of this section is the impact of the findings of both reports on the development of real estate within the urban renewal area.

The findings in *Appendix B* support actions by the LRA and the City to attract and support specific industries that are positioned for growth within the City and Essex County. The City can develop a competitive advantage by supporting the industries which are already showing growth and for which the City has employees with the necessary skills; either has or

can develop appropriate physical space to house these businesses; and can provide amenities to encourage businesses to expand within or relocate to the urban renewal area.

However, both *Appendix B* and *Appendix C* provide information that suggest why the rehabilitation and redevelopment of buildings for commercial and industrial uses has been difficult to date. As noted in *Section 1 Characteristics*, recent successful residential development in the mills includes Washington Mills, Union Crossing Phase 1, and Loft 550; other projects including the Pacific Mills are in construction; and several additional projects are in the permitting stage. Redevelopment of the larger mill properties for commercial and light industrial uses has been more challenging.

Table 5 (from Appendix B) indicates the amount of square footage of different asset classes (office, industrial, flex, and retail) that was vacant in the City of Lawrence and in the larger submarket (Lawrence, Andover, North Andover, Methuen, and Haverhill) in the first quarter of

2016. Note that the gross rent in Lawrence is lower than in the submarket for all asset classes. The expectation would be that a tenant would move to an area with lower rent costs to reduce their leasing expenses.

However, those same low rents make renovation of existing building space more difficult for property owners. Before making such an investment, a property owner must be certain of receiving a rent high enough to obtain the financing needed for the capital investment.

*Appendix C* is an investigation of defined scenarios to understand how development might be undertaken within the urban renewal area. The Appendix tests two main scenarios:

- A comparison of new construction under the existing RGO zoning and under the proposed 40R zoning
- A comparison of development scenarios for 370 and 372 Essex Street as prototypes for smaller development projects along Essex Street



The challenge for property owners and potential developers is that even with the use of tax credits and grant programs from the State, the tested development scenarios still had gaps in the financing structure; in other words, the funding strategies available to a developer did not meet the full cost of construction/reconstruction.

Because the debt structure is dependent on the income generated by the project, lower rents create a lower income stream thus reducing the amount of debt that can be financed on income alone. This relationship explains the difficulty that the private market has in addressing the need for retail, office, and industrial space. If the space needs to be retrofitted or newly constructed, then the current rents do not support such construction. The mills can be renovated as housing because there is both a greater demand at a higher price per square foot and there are more funding programs, including tax credits, soft debt and grant programs, available to close the financing gap.

As the LRA moves forward, it should consider how its actions can either help close the financing gap or help increase base rents for nonresidential space.

Table 5

<b>Real Estate Market Conditions Summary</b>			
<b>Space Type and Geography</b>	<b>Vacant SF</b>	<b>Gross Rent per SF per Year</b>	<b>Forecast Ave Ann NET Absorption (SF)</b>
	(1stQ 2016)	(1stQ 2016)	(2016-2018)
<b>OFFICE</b>			
Submarket	2,200,000	\$ 16.14	7,800
City of Lawrence	678,000	\$ 15.21	4,200
<b>INDUSTRIAL</b>			
Submarket	1,420,000	\$ 4.81	(58,000)
City of Lawrence	685,000	\$ 4.42	5,500
<b>FLEX</b>			
Submarket	1,546,000	\$ 8.96	(57,000)
City of Lawrence	303,000	\$ 7.81	(22,000)
<b>RETAIL</b>			
Submarket	321,000	\$ 16.37	(19,000)
City of Lawrence	116,000	\$ 12.90	(6,500)

Source: CoStar Property Information Systems, April 2016; and FXM Associates

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## 2.3 Clearance and Rehabilitation

760 CMR 12.02 (2) requires certain additional information if the urban renewal plan proposes clearance and/or rehabilitation activities.

### CLEARANCE

This Urban Renewal Plan does not anticipate any clearance activities within the first five years of this plan. Proposed acquisitions include properties that are either vacant or that have existing buildings that can be rehabilitated; there are no plans to demolish buildings within Phase I (the first five years).

Anticipated future projects include the expansion of Pemberton Park (Phase II: years 6-10) and the redevelopment of the Merrimac Paper site, the location of a significant fire in 2014.

The expansion of Pemberton Park would require the removal of an existing surface parking lot. No buildings exist on the site at present.

The Merrimac Paper site is undergoing environmental remediation and demolition to address the impacts of the fire and the existing hazardous materials. Some of the buildings have already been demolished. This is a possible Phase III project (years 10-20); it is possible that additional clearance of the buildings would be required before the site could be redeveloped.

### REHABILITATION

Within the first five years, the LRA anticipates five types of projects:

- A catalyst project on Essex Street, undertaken by the LRA itself or in partnership with a developer
- Infill development along Essex Street and elsewhere in the proposed 40R District. Such development is anticipated to be by private developers who respond to the incentives of the zoning changes. The LRA may acquire

property by purchase or transfer from the City (including tax title parcels) and either seek the entitlements themselves or partner with a developer to do so

- Larger-scale development along the Merrimack Street Corridor, most likely by private developers responding to the incentives within this plan
- Streetscape and other public infrastructure improvements undertaken by the City
- Rehabilitation of historic mills for residential and commercial uses undertaken by the private market

The existing street and land use pattern is appropriate for all five types of projects. Streets do not need to be rerouted, but a significant portion of the street network within the urban renewal area should be upgraded to meet the Commonwealth's Complete Streets standards.

The economic, market, and development analyses undertaken by the consultant team indicate that the urban renewal area has evidence of vitality in portions of the urban renewal area, but

that the private market cannot address certain conditions without assistance from the public sector. In particular, the conditions of blight that render this urban renewal area a Decadent Area require a coordinated effort among multiple parties, including the City, the LRA, local nonprofits, various agencies of the Commonwealth, and the private market.

However, certain industry trends – in particular, those related to health care, education, food production, and specialty manufacturing – are positive for the future of the urban renewal area, if those trends can be captured by the coordinated effort recommended in this plan.

Rehabilitation of underperforming structures within the urban renewal area is likely to reinforce and expand the existing vitality in the business community; in particular, those small businesses that do not have the resources to undertake such projects alone.

*Section 3.3 Proposed Redevelopment Actions* discusses the LRA's intent with respect to proposed

rehabilitation projects. The LRA developed a set of criteria to guide their choice of a catalyst project. The purpose of these criteria goes beyond the initial choice of a catalyst project; these criteria are relevant throughout the twenty-year life of the plan.

The threshold criteria – those that must be met before a project is considered – are as follows:

1. The project must support the vision, goals, and/or target industries identified in this Urban Renewal Plan
2. The project is not likely to be developed by the private market acting on its own
3. The project must be feasible and financeable

In addition to satisfying these threshold criteria, catalyst projects selected by the LRA should also address additional criteria defined in *Section 3.3 Proposed Redevelopment Actions*.

4. One potential project that is still under consideration by the LRA is the rehabilitation of 370 Essex Street and infill development at 372 Essex Street. These two properties

have been used as prototypes for scenario-based analyses of potential rehabilitation and construction costs for projects on Essex Street. (See *Appendix C: Feasibility Analysis For A Lawrence 40R Overlay District And 370 Essex Street*.) These properties are owned by the City.

The City has applied for two grants for streetscape and other public infrastructure improvements that, if the grants are awarded, would have an impact on the urban renewal area within the first five years.

The first application was for a MassWorks grant to continue streetscape improvements along the entire Merrimack Street corridor.

The City also applied for a TIGER grant for the Amesbury Street Corridor, a critical corridor linking the subareas of the urban renewal area. The request was for \$8 million and assumed \$2 million in matching funds. The grant was denied, but the City intends to reapply.



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## 2.4 Local Survey and Conformance with the Municipality's Comprehensive Plan

760 CMR 12.02 (2) requires that the urban renewal plan be based on a local survey and conform with the municipality's comprehensive plan.

### LOCAL SURVEY

The widespread use of GIS allows all mapping activities and analyses to be based on the municipality's GIS data. The City provided all parcel data and the majority of the base shapefiles and layers. Additional layers and shapefiles were produced during the study process based on a combination of research and public input. All maps in this Urban Renewal Plan, unless identified as stemming from a separate source, use the GIS data provided by the City as the base of the map.

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The City of Lawrence does not have a current comprehensive plan. However, a number of planning studies have been conducted over the years in some or all of the urban renewal area. The most recent studies are the following:

- *City of Lawrence Comprehensive Housing Study*, August 2015 (Karen Sunnarborg Consulting, Charleen Regan Consulting, Abacus Architects + Planners)
- *Lawrence Downtown West Planning Study*, August 2015 (City of Lawrence, MassDevelopment, Utile)
- *Merrimack Street Land Use Planning Study*, 2016 (City of Lawrence, McCabe Consulting)
- *Manchester Rail Corridor Brownfields Area-Wide Plan*, In process (City of Lawrence, Crosby, Schlessinger, Smallridge LLC)

The recommendations of this Urban Renewal Plan are consistent with, or build upon, the recommendations of these studies.

### Comprehensive Housing Study

The focus of this report is the existing conditions of housing throughout the City, the market forces that shape the availability of and demand for housing at different income levels, and the strategies to address the gaps in the range of housing within the City. A critical finding of this report is that while a reasonable amount of housing is affordable to those earning the median wage in Lawrence, the majority of households earn far less than the median wage. In other words, many people who live in Lawrence work outside of the city, earning wages that are not sufficient to be able to afford housing within the city. The report also notes that high demand, driven in part by Lawrence's proximity to Boston, increases rents but low asset values do not provide sufficient incentive or capital for smaller landlords to invest in upgrades to their property. The existing housing stock is older and of lesser quality than the housing in the renovated mills. However, the newer housing in the mills is more expensive, more attractive

to a population that turns over quickly, and less attractive to families who might stabilize a neighborhood.

The following goals, quoted from pages 3-4 of the report, are relevant to this urban renewal area:

- “Promote an economically diverse community that is capable of welcoming new residents from the region, country and world while retaining those with greater economic resources who could choose to live elsewhere but want to stay in the community.
- Leverage and expand existing public and private resources and attract new resources.
- Provide a wide range of housing alternatives to meet diverse housing needs.
- Support developers to promote quality and sustainable housing development and redevelopment opportunities.
- Link housing strategies to more comprehensive planning and design guidelines that direct downtown and neighborhood revitalization efforts while promoting an economically diverse community.

- Remove barriers to development that improves neighborhoods, attracts investment and raises the quality of life for residents.”

On pages 4-5, the *Comprehensive Housing Study* recommends four categories of strategies to support these and other identified goals. The categories are as follows:

- Capacity Building (related to the City’s staffing and resources)
- Regulatory (related to reduction of blight and safety issues, streamlining the regulatory process, and coordination of efforts)
- Development (related to new construction, redevelopment, or rehabilitation)
- Preservation (related to existing affordable or small-scale housing)

For the downtown, centered on Essex Street, the *Comprehensive Housing Study* recommends encouraging housing on the upper floors above commercial uses and suggests investigating the redevelopment of existing parking lots (page 99) into multi-story mixed-use buildings. The report notes that assembling parcels may create

developments that have a higher financial feasibility.

The report draws on the work of the *Downtown West Planning Study* to recommend streetscape improvements to connect the mill buildings with Essex Street and suggest creating physical connections between the North Essex Community College in the western half of the downtown and the Lawrence General Hospital and nearby medical offices in the eastern half. Additional recommendations include establishing design guidelines and other regulatory changes to encourage appropriate development and link the downtown to the surrounding neighborhoods.

Finally, on page 141, the *Comprehensive Housing Study* recommends that the City “use the regulatory and financial resources and expertise of the reinvigorated Lawrence Redevelopment Authority to steer and set the vision for downtown development.”

## Lawrence Downtown West Planning Study

The *Downtown West Planning Study* was completed at approximately the same time as the *Comprehensive Housing Study*. Its recommendations flow from a study of development opportunities in the area west of Campagnone Common, stretching from Haverhill Street to the Merrimack River.

This study references three previous plans:

- *Canal District Strategic Master Plan* (2008): The study area includes the proposed urban renewal area, but expands beyond it to include Lawrence General Hospital
- *Open Space Plan* (2009): The study area is the entire City
- *ULI North Canal District TAP Report* (2013)

These three reports, and the *Downtown West Planning Study* itself, cover much of the urban renewal area.

The *Downtown West Planning Study* references recommendations from the earlier plans that are consistent with both the findings and recommendations of the *Downtown West Planning Study* and with the strategies and actions proposed by this Urban Renewal Plan. These earlier recommendations include the following:

- *Canal District Strategic Master Plan* (2008)
  - Enhance Essex Street as the main mixed-use spine
  - Focus new residential development on the river and canal edge
  - Keep the southwest quadrant of the study area light industrial (Note: this would be the Merrimack Street Corridor)
  - Improve the main bridges across the Merrimack River
  - Create waterfront esplanades along Canal street and the riverfront
  - Add streetscape improvements to Essex, Merrimack, Union, and Broadway Streets

- Establish an urban renewal district as an implementation strategy
- *Open Space Plan* (2009)
  - Enhance the sidewalk along Canal Street
  - Consider a trail that loops along North Canal and the Merrimack River
- *ULI North Canal District TAP Report* (2013)
  - Existing mill buildings are difficult to redevelop because of the size and the layout of the floor plates
  - Conduct a parking study to identify where and how parking can be most effective
  - Create wayfinding and signage to reinforce the identity of the area

Both the *Canal District Strategic Master Plan* and the *Downtown West Planning Study* identify priority development sites. The buildout analyses for the Truell site (identified as 372 Essex Street) in the *Downtown West Planning Study* were used in this Urban Renewal Planning process to study the market implications of various development scenarios for 370 Essex Street; one



scenario considered a joint project linking the rehabilitation of 370 Essex to infill development at 372 Essex/Truell site.

Recommendations from the *Downtown West Planning Study* itself include the following:

- Short-term
  - Consider converting some of the one-way streets to two-way streets (the TIGER grant application identified converting Amesbury Street to a two-way pattern between Canal and Lowell Streets as an important change)
  - Improve signage for off-street parking lots to direct visitors
  - Upgrade the facade of the Buckley Garage with graphics and lighting
  - Adjust parking pricing to create incentives for long-term parking off the street
  - Undertake streetscape improvements in terms of basic repair along all streets and more intensive updates in key locations
  - Improve storefronts with quick, inexpensive actions

- Long-term
  - Re-use upper floors for housing or office
  - Create incubator spaces in vacant storefronts
  - Redevelop brownfield sites
  - Create an urban renewal district that includes the Downtown West area

### Merrimack Street Land Use Planning Study

The *Merrimack Street Study* identifies a number of recommendations to support business expansion along Merrimack Street, including several build out scenarios that evaluate appropriate mixes of land uses within the corridor. In all three scenarios, the mix focused on commercial and industrial development, which informed and are consistent with the recommendations of this Urban Renewal Plan.

The study identifies a number of regulatory and funding strategies for the implementation of the

recommended strategies within the plan. Pages 116-120 of the *Merrimack Street Study* describe these tools in detail; they are summarized below.

### Regulatory Tools

- **Zoning:** The study suggests creating a Planned Industrial Development District (PIDD) for the corridor to address specific uses, parking needs, and dimensional standards
- **Chapter 91:** The study notes the public access requirements for riverfront access under Chapter 91 and suggests the implementation of the North Canal/South Canal Walking Loop as one means of addressing the requirements
- **Complete Streets:** The study recommends extending the Complete Streets requirements from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) along the entire corridor
- **Urban Renewal Plan:** The study recommends including the Merrimack Street Corridor in this Urban Renewal Plan

## Financing Tools

- **District Improvement Financing (DIF):** This tool uses future tax revenues as an income stream for bonds to implement improvements in a designated area
- **Massachusetts Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP):** This is a state program that provides tax credits to businesses creating new jobs in Gateway Cities. Manufacturers can receive additional incentives
- **Local Infrastructure Development Program (Chapter 23L):** This State program allows municipalities to assess individual property owners for infrastructure improvements and work with MassDevelopment to fund those improvements
- **Infrastructure Investment Incentives Act (I-Cube):** This program is a partnership among the State, a municipality, and a private entity. The State considers the future revenue based on the tax stream from the entity when investing in the local public infrastructure needed to support the project

- **Grants:** The study identifies the MassWorks grant, grants for rail trails, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Land and Water Conservation Funding, and other grant programs that could support smaller pieces of the proposed improvements
- **Other Development Incentives:** The study suggests a streamlined permitting process, vocational education programs to train the local workforce, and tax incentives as other sources of implementation

## Manchester Rail Corridor Brownfields Area-Wide Plan

In addition, the City is undertaking the *Manchester Rail Corridor Brownfields Area-Wide Plan*. The abandoned rail corridor and the parcels west of Broadway have been included within the boundary of the urban renewal area in anticipation of the results of this study process and its expected recommendations relative to improvements to the rail corridor and surrounding area.

## 2.5 Regional Planning

The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) is the regional planning agency for Lawrence. They have identified education and healthcare – two of the target industries in this plan – as critical industries in the Merrimack Valley. The website notes the strengths Lawrence has in these industries already: Northern Essex Community College and Cambridge College are adjacent to or within the urban renewal area, as is the Lawrence General Hospital, the “largest acute healthcare system in the Merrimack Valley” ([www.mvpc.org/the-valley](http://www.mvpc.org/the-valley)).

Regional plans include the following:

- *Clean Energy Action Plan*, 2012
- *Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy*, 2014

The *Clean Energy Action Plan* provides recommendations for Lawrence, beginning on page 49. Goals with relevance to this Urban Renewal Plan are as follows:

- Become a Green Community (Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources Green Communities Program)
- Retrofit streetlights and traffic signals
- Increase recycling efforts
- Implement energy-saving building codes
- Promote transit-oriented development (TOD)

The *Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy* identifies Merrimack Street and the Lawrence Gateway/Downtown as Priority Development Areas (PDA) of State Significance (page 29). An Area of State Significance meets the highest number of the criteria developed by MVPC (based on EOHED’s criteria) as part of their study.

The recommended strategies (pages 53-54) for both PDAs are as follows:

- Pursue funding for infrastructure to implement the *Canal District Strategic Master Plan*
- Promote its designation as a federal Renewal Community to businesses

## 2.6 Consistency with the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles

DHCD requests that communities undertaking an urban renewal plan consider the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles. The chart below identifies these principles and the strategies within the plan that support those principles.

SUSTAINABILITY PRINCIPLES	LAWRENCETBD STRATEGIES	CONSISTENT?
<b>1. Concentrate Development and Mix Uses</b>	Preserve, protect, and enhance the City's historic buildings and infrastructure through adaptive re-use. Activate Essex Street through new and expanded retail, cafes, restaurants, galleries, and upper-floor residential uses.	Y
<b>2. Advance Equity</b>	Create linkage mechanisms that capture the value of new development for citywide quality of life improvements. Support the expansion of small businesses that generate jobs and build local wealth. Create a more attractive environment for walking and biking and improve public safety throughout the urban renewal area.	Y
<b>3. Make Efficient Decisions</b>	Support the expansion of small businesses that generate jobs and build local wealth. Incentivize/accelerate development of large vacant parcels for light manufacturing, health care, education, and mixed-use development.	Y
<b>4. Protect Land and Ecosystems</b>	Encourage sustainable development through renewable energy production, energy efficiency, and Low-Impact Development.	Y
<b>5. Use Natural Resources Wisely</b>		Y
<b>6. Expand Housing Opportunities</b>	Preserve, protect, and enhance the City's historic buildings and infrastructure through adaptive re-use.	Y
<b>7. Provide Transportation Choice</b>	Create a more attractive environment for walking and biking and improve public safety throughout the urban renewal area.	Y
<b>8 Increase Job and Business Opportunities</b>	Support the expansion of small businesses that generate jobs and build local wealth. Incentivize/accelerate development of large vacant parcels for light manufacturing, health care, education, and mixed-use development.	Y
<b>9. Promote Clean Energy</b>	Encourage sustainable development through renewable energy production, energy efficiency, and Low-Impact Development.	Y
<b>10. Plan Regionally</b>	Bolster the City's arts, cultural and recreational assets and attract more visitors to Lawrence.	Y





LawrenceTBD

## 3. OBJECTIVES

## 3 760 CMR 12.02 (3): Objectives

### 3.1 Plan Goals and Objectives

#### VISION AND GOALS

The vision for this Urban Renewal Plan builds upon the initial goals of the LRA and is the result of research into current physical and economic conditions as well as extensive feedback from residents and other stakeholders who participated in public meetings, surveys, and the CAC.

#### Goals for the Process

The LRA's goals for the process were as follows:

*The Plan will identify action steps that the LRA and other public and private partners can take to advance four key goals:*

- *Economic development*
- *Job creation*
- *Improved quality of life*

- *Fiscal stability*

#### Vision and Goals for the Plan

The resulting vision and supporting goals for the process are as follows:

*Create a thriving local economy in which residents have access to new employment opportunities and higher-paying jobs, enabling them to afford better housing and more goods and services within the city. To accomplish this, the LRA will develop an Urban Renewal Plan that:*

*FIRST: draws from and encourages the talent in terms of labor and local businesses that exists within Lawrence today;*

*SECOND: builds on Lawrence's physical assets, including its historic buildings, rivers and canals, infrastructure, and transportation;*

*THIRD: projects a positive image for the City of Lawrence, encouraging both residents and visitors to support local businesses and cultural institutions;*

*FOURTH: attracts regional employers to locate or expand in Lawrence.*

The LRA will support these four goals with specific strategies and related actions.

#### STRATEGIES

The LRA plans to support these goals with a combination of strategies that reflect both its legislative authority to develop land itself and to provide controls on the development of land by others within an urban renewal area, and the strength of community organizations and the participation of City officials and staff.

The strategies and actions summarized in the *Executive Summary* are presented in this section in additional detail. The strategies are as follows:

1. Create a more attractive environment for walking and biking and improve public safety throughout the urban renewal area.
2. Incentivize and accelerate development of large vacant parcels for light manufacturing.

ing, health care, education, and mixed-use development.

3. Bolster the City's arts, cultural and recreational assets and attract more visitors to Lawrence.
4. Preserve, protect, and enhance the City's historic buildings and infrastructure through adaptive re-use.
5. Support the expansion of small businesses that generate jobs and build local wealth.
6. Activate Essex Street through new and expanded retail, cafes, restaurants, galleries, and upper-floor residential uses.
7. Encourage sustainable development through renewable energy production, energy efficiency, and Low-Impact Development.
8. Create linkage mechanisms that capture the value of new development for citywide quality of life improvements.

The actions that implement the strategies are divided into four groups:

- A. Property Acquisition, Permitting, and Development Actions
- B. Regulatory Framework and Incentives

#### GENERAL ACTIVITIES OF A REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

*The Lawrence Redevelopment Authority consists of five (5) members. Four (4) members are appointed by the Mayor, and one member is appointed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. All Members shall be appointed to serve for initial terms of one, two, four, and five years, respectively.*

*The Lawrence Redevelopment Authority shall have the following responsibility;*

- *Under General Laws Chapter 121 B Section 5, as well as Section 7. A housing or redevelopment authority shall elect from among its members a chairman and a vice-chairman, and may employ counsel, an executive director who shall be ex officio secretary of the authority,*
- *Establish rehabilitation and design standards;*
- *Assemble and dispose of land, including the taking of real estate through eminent domain;*
- *Relocate businesses and residents occupying property in urban renewal areas;*
- *Demolish and/or rehabilitate substandard structures;*
- *Participate in real estate development and commercial revitalization;*
- *Issue bonds, borrow money, invest funds, and receive grants; and*
- *Accept gifts or bequests.*

SOURCE: WEBSITE OF THE CITY OF LAWRENCE

- C. Financial and Technical Assistance for Property Owners
- D. Transportation and Infrastructure Improvements

Three of these categories (A, B, and D) require direct action by the LRA. The LRA does not expect to undertake these actions alone, and proposed partners are linked to each of the actions within the Implementation Plan. Actions in category C do not require direct action by the LRA, but support actions in the other categories and are included in this section on objectives.

These actions are anticipated to take place in phases over the twenty-year life of this Urban Renewal Plan. *Section 4 Financial Plan* contains the relevant cost information for actions that are expected to occur within Phase I.

- **Phase I:** Completed within 3-5 years
- **Phase II:** Completed within 5-10 years
- **Phase III:** Completed within 10-20 years

The key element in the LRA's efforts is the need to address those conditions described in *Section 2 Eligibility* that are preventing the private market from investing in this urban renewal area. The anticipated physical improvements are designed to spur investment either by improving public infrastructure (streetscape, parks and open space, transportation) or by creating a catalyst for future investment by others with strategic development projects (renovation of existing buildings or construction of public parking facilities).

This plan also establishes regulatory controls in the form of changes to zoning that allow for greater density in exchange for public benefits, such as a requirement for the provision of additional affordable housing. The regulatory controls include design guidelines that will ensure a consistent character and quality of development throughout the urban renewal area.

Physical improvements and regulatory controls are linked – for example, regulatory controls that relax parking requirements may be accom-

panied by the construction of a parking structure that supports those lower ratios.

Regulatory controls and other actions identified in the Implementation Plan are also linked – for example, the proposed establishment of an historic district that can fund the required aesthetic improvements by allowing property owners to apply for federal and state historic tax credits. In some cases, the link between physical investments and regulatory controls may require additional partners. For example, while this plan will establish specific regulatory controls, the application of those controls (such as design review) will be within the purview of the Planning Board and the implementation of the controls (such as zoning enforcement) will be the responsibility of City staff. This plan recommends a bilingual guide to permitting and development, and a coordinated pre-application meeting with department heads and City Boards and Commissions as methods of improving the efficiency, transparency, and predictability of the regulatory process.



## 3.2 Effect on Jobs in the Urban Renewal Area

760 CMR 12.02 (3)(b) requires a specific estimate of the number of jobs retained, created, and/or eliminated by the proposed redevelopment actions in the Urban Renewal Plan. The proposed improvements have no immediate and specific effect on either job creation or loss.

The anticipated effect of the actions within this Urban Renewal Plan – and a major goal of this plan – is that existing employers will be encouraged to expand and new employers will be attracted to the area due to a combination of the planned physical improvements, the changes to the regulatory environment, and the planned actions to assist small businesses. The key to job growth will be twofold: (1) the links between the five target industries: Food Manufacturing and Production, Specialty Manufacturing, Healthcare, Education, and Arts and Culture; and (2) the three initiatives of the LRA: regulatory changes that provide incentives for these

industries, the development of one or more catalyst projects to support these industries; and the partnerships the LRA will develop over time. These partnerships should include businesses, local educational institutions, and local community groups who can provide training and support for potential local employees.

The LRA's goals for the process of developing this Urban Renewal Plan have been to focus on economic development and job creation. Deliberate support of those industries that already have roots in Lawrence and the potential for strong growth is critical. The consultant team prepared an extensive analysis of market conditions related to both job growth and the demand for certain types of land uses. The full report is provided in *Appendix B: Economic Development and Real Estate Market Conditions and Trends*.

The client team identified the Health Care and Social Assistance Sector (as defined by the North American Industry Classification System or NAICS) as the leading growth industry for both the City and Essex County between

2004 and 2014. This sector is projected to be the leading growth sector through 2020, leading to demand for both employees and office space suitable for the health industry. The report notes that in 2014, about 4,300 City of Lawrence residents were engaged as Healthcare Practitioners and Technicians and Healthcare Support personnel. By 2020, the demand for workers for these skills will increase, and these workers are paid a higher average annual wage (\$57,000) than the average annual wage for all jobs in the City of Lawrence (\$48,000).

Medical office space also commands a premium, with an average lease price 25% higher than the average lease price for all office space. The report identifies an unmet current demand and projects additional future demand.

The second industry with potential to create jobs is the Food Manufacturing and Production Sector. This category has potential at all scales including community kitchens to support small restaurants and entrepreneurs, buying cooperatives and warehouses to support the

local bodegas, and new food manufacturing and production facilities. This sector has two added advantages: excellent access to water and a thriving, multicultural community with many food traditions. Employee training, a catalyst project that provides incubator space for small businesses, and coordinated marketing could capture projected increases in jobs for this industry and projected demand for manufacturing and production space.

The table to the right is extracted from the report in *Appendix B* and provides additional information about the projected increases in both jobs and physical space by 2020. Partnerships among the City, businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations will be critical to capturing the projected growth in jobs in the region within Lawrence itself.

Table 1

Selected Growth Sectors in City of Lawrence and Essex County Based on 2004-2014 Trend Forecasts				
Industry	Jobs in 2014	Projected Jobs in 2020	Projected	Projected %
			Jobs Increase 2014-2020	Increase 2014-2020
Food Manufacturing-City	737	924	187	25%
Medical Devices -County	5,486	5,968	482	9%
Finance and Insurance-City	241	278	37	15%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing-City	237	247	10	4%
Professional & Technical Services-County	33,112	34,295	1,183	4%
Management of Companies & Enterprises -County	5,039	5,366	327	6%
Educational Services -County	30,039	30,652	613	2%
Health Care & Social Assistance -City	9,787	11,564	1,777	18%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation-County	11,720	12,743	1,023	9%
Accommodation & Food Services-City	1,147	1,337	190	17%
Other Services, ex. Public Admin-City	1,184	1,724	540	46%

Source: MA Dept of Labor ES202 Data Series; US Dept of Commerce, Regional Economic Information System; and FXM Associates

Table 2

Projected Space Demand through 2020 Based on Trend Projected Jobs				
	Essex County		City of Lawrence	
	Jobs	Space Demand (SF)	Jobs	Space Demand (SF)
Food Manufacturing	1,140	570,000	187	93,500
Office Using Jobs	2,840	852,000	0	
Health Care & Social Assistance	9,994	3,997,600	1,777	710,800
Accommodations & Food Services	2,087	2,087,000	190	190,000
Educational Services	613	613,000	0	
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	1,023	409,200	0	
Other Services	2,293	1,146,500	540	270,000

### 3.3 Proposed Redevelopment Actions

A major function of any redevelopment authority is the redevelopment of land – either through its own efforts or through control of how others develop properties within the urban renewal area.

This section provides the description of proposed redevelopment activities as required by 760 CMR 12.02 (3)(a).

The LRA will undertake the following actions within the urban renewal area that fall under the heading of site development or improvements.

#### ACQUIRE PROPERTY

*Acquire vacant tax-title properties and coordinate permitting and site preparation for new development.*

*Acquire parcels needed to support public infrastructure improvements.*

*Transfer ownership of relevant City-owned parcels to the LRA.*

*Coordinate permitting and site preparation for new development.*

The City has liens on a number of parcels whose owners owe significant property taxes over a long period of time. The City has a process whereby it can take those parcels to satisfy the outstanding property tax debt. The LRA may then acquire those parcels and either develop them itself, take them through the permitting process and then dispose of them, or dispose of them immediately. Disposition of land by the LRA within an urban renewal area is regulated by 760 CMR 12.05 Land Disposition and is described in *Section 6.8 760 CMR 12.02 (10): Disposition*.

The LRA has identified four actions it would undertake relative to property acquisition and disposition:

1. Acquires property and disposes such property to the City or the State
2. Acquires property and, prior to the entitlement phase (acquisition of all relevant permits), disposes of the property to a third party subject to a Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) that governs future development of the parcel
3. Acquires property and completes entitlement process; selects a development partner and disposes of the property to that partner subject to a LDA
4. Acquires property and completes entitlement process; develops property (alone or with partner); holds property for income and/or public benefit

The first action is most likely to be used for infrastructure improvements. The second and third actions are appropriate for properties the LRA does not want to hold or does not have the expertise to develop. Such a process could raise capital funds to support additional acquisitions. The fourth action is appropriate for generating operating income or for supporting a public benefit, such as a use that is important but

unlikely to generate sufficient revenue for the private market to support in the short-term.

## DEVELOP A CATALYST PROJECT

*Explore the creation of a catalyst project with arts or food-related ground floor use on Essex Street.*

*Explore the creation of a catalyst project with food production or manufacturing on the Merrimack Street Corridor.*

The LRA has identified the redevelopment of a building or buildings that can act as a catalyst for the Essex Street area as part of their Phase II strategy. Such a project could be a model for the use of historic tax credits, the New Workforce Housing Fund, and other state and federal funding programs that are applicable to other buildings within the area.

Beyond funding opportunities, the redevelopment of a site on Essex Street can also serve as a model for the cross-pollination of businesses opportunities throughout the urban renewal area. At a small business meeting earlier in the process, participants noted the need for a store

that sells art and photography supplies to the numerous artists in the area. Other opportunities explored by the LRA and the consultant team in response to public input include tying a restaurant/retail outlet on Essex Street to manufacturing businesses in the mills and in the Merrimack Street Corridor, including specialty manufacturing and food production. Ground floor retail could be supported by office and/or residential uses on the upper floors. A catalyst project on Essex should follow the designation of the area as a National Register Historic District to allow the use of state and federal tax credits to support redevelopment efforts.

The Merrimack Street Corridor is the ideal place to encourage light industrial uses. The availability of water in this area is among the top five communities in the state; trucks have easy access along Merrimack Street to I-495 and thus to Boston and New Hampshire. At the state level, there is deep concern about food security, availability, and distribution. The Massachusetts Food System Collaborative ([www.mafoodsystem.org](http://www.mafoodsystem.org)) released its *Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan* in 2015. The state has

allocated significant funding for the Massachusetts Food Trust ([www.thefoodtrust.org](http://www.thefoodtrust.org)).

Tying a food production/manufacturing use in the Merrimack Street Corridor with a retail/distribution use on Essex Street would knit the two areas together in an economic partnership that is now missing. The Western Massachusetts Food Processing Center is a model for such a project. Local educational institutions could be potential partners, and the local workforce could be trained in these job skills as part of the emphasis on this economic sector. Groundwork Lawrence is another logical partner given their work on local food initiatives.

## Project Criteria

The LRA developed a set of criteria to guide their choice of a catalyst project. The purpose of these criteria goes beyond the initial choice of a catalyst project; these criteria are relevant throughout the twenty-year life of the plan.

The threshold criteria – those that must be met before a project is considered – are as follows:



1. The project must support the vision, goals, and/or target industries identified in this Urban Renewal Plan.
2. The project is not likely to be developed by the private market acting on its own.
3. The project must be feasible and financeable.

In addition to satisfying these threshold criteria, catalyst projects selected by the LRA should also address one or more of the following criteria:

4. The building or site is in a prominent location, either because it is highly visible or strategically important within the urban renewal area.
5. The project will have sufficient scale to influence investment in the surrounding area.
6. The design of the project and the proposed uses will serve as a visible demonstration for the type of development the LRA wants to promote within the urban renewal area.
7. Parcels and/or buildings that are vacant or underutilized will be a higher priority than those that are economically productive.
8. The development program will offer the LRA the opportunity to partner with city and/or community groups and institutions.

## DEVELOP ADDITIONAL PROJECTS THROUGHOUT AREA

*Create a permanent concert venue/stage at Pemberton Park and tie to local tourism efforts.*

*Develop one or more structured parking facilities to support downtown and mill development.*

*Redevelop Merrimack Paper site for light industrial uses.*

### Pemberton Park

A proposal to create a permanent concert venue at Pemberton Park was a recommendation that surfaced during the public process and received wide support. Figure 1-11 shows the existing parks; an expanded Pemberton Park would address the current lack of parks on the west side of the urban renewal area.

Pemberton Park lies on the main north-south axis of Amesbury Street, and is a central location within the urban renewal area. The proposed lighting of the Casey Bridge and the

proposed improvements to the Buckley Garage would have a direct impact on the attractiveness of an expanded park as a geographically central place within the area for cultural activities.

Lawrence is fortunate to have many cultural events, and some participants expressed concern about the impact on Campagnone Common, an historic green, which is used to stage the regular events. Participants in the public workshops identified a number of uses and activities they would like to see at Pemberton Park, beyond staging for the festivals. Many indicated the desire for an outdoor music venue, such as the Hatch Shell along the Boston Esplanade. People identified facilities for visitors and kiosks that could be used for vendors at the festivals as other desirable permanent structures.

While capital funding may be available for permanent structures and site work, operating funds for activities and ongoing maintenance may be more of a challenge. Participants were eager to have a year-round schedule of activities, ranging from tables for chess, ping-pong, and other activities to winter activities, such as ice skating. Participants were split between wanting

a family-friendly park and one that catered to a more adult crowd (such as Lawn on D, in the Boston waterfront).

A nonprofit organization, either an existing one or a new group dedicated to the park, would need to work with DCR and the City to develop a budget for both capital needs and the annual operating budget. Groundwork Lawrence, already a partner on parks throughout the City, should be invited into the conversations on this park.

## Additional Parking

Although there are many surface lots and a few structured parking garages within the urban renewal area, additional parking will be needed over time to support two initiatives:

- Residential development on the upper floors along Essex Street
- Additional expansion of businesses along the Merrimack Street Corridor

The provision of parking thus becomes a tool for revitalization as it can help unlock the redevelopment potential of vacant and underutilized properties. Figure 1-2 shows the existing parking lots in the area. The implication of this significant parking coverage is two-fold:

- If existing lots are to be developed, then the current parking on those lots will have to be provided elsewhere
- If a building on a lot without sufficient space for on-site parking is developed to its highest and best use, the temptation may be to demolish an existing adjacent building to provide parking for the project

By providing parking facilities at strategic locations, the LRA and/or the City can encourage infill development on existing lots or rehabilitation of historic buildings without the need to demolish adjacent properties. The current RGO district allows developers to provide parking off site by leasing public or other private spaces up to 1,000 feet from the lot line of the project.

The key is to target vacant sites that are big enough to accommodate a parking lot, deck, or garage, and are within walking distance of transportation and other important destinations.

## Merrimack Paper

The Merrimack Paper site had a significant fire in January 2014 that destroyed the majority of the building. The site is under environmental remediation governed by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), at an initial cost of about \$2 million. Additional remediation may still be necessary.

The property has a significant lien against it from the City for both property taxes and fees. When the remediation is complete, the site will be available for redevelopment, and the parcels will be under the control of the City.

The site is a critical link in the proposed rail trail as the rail line bisects the site. Any development efforts would be in Phase III of this plan.

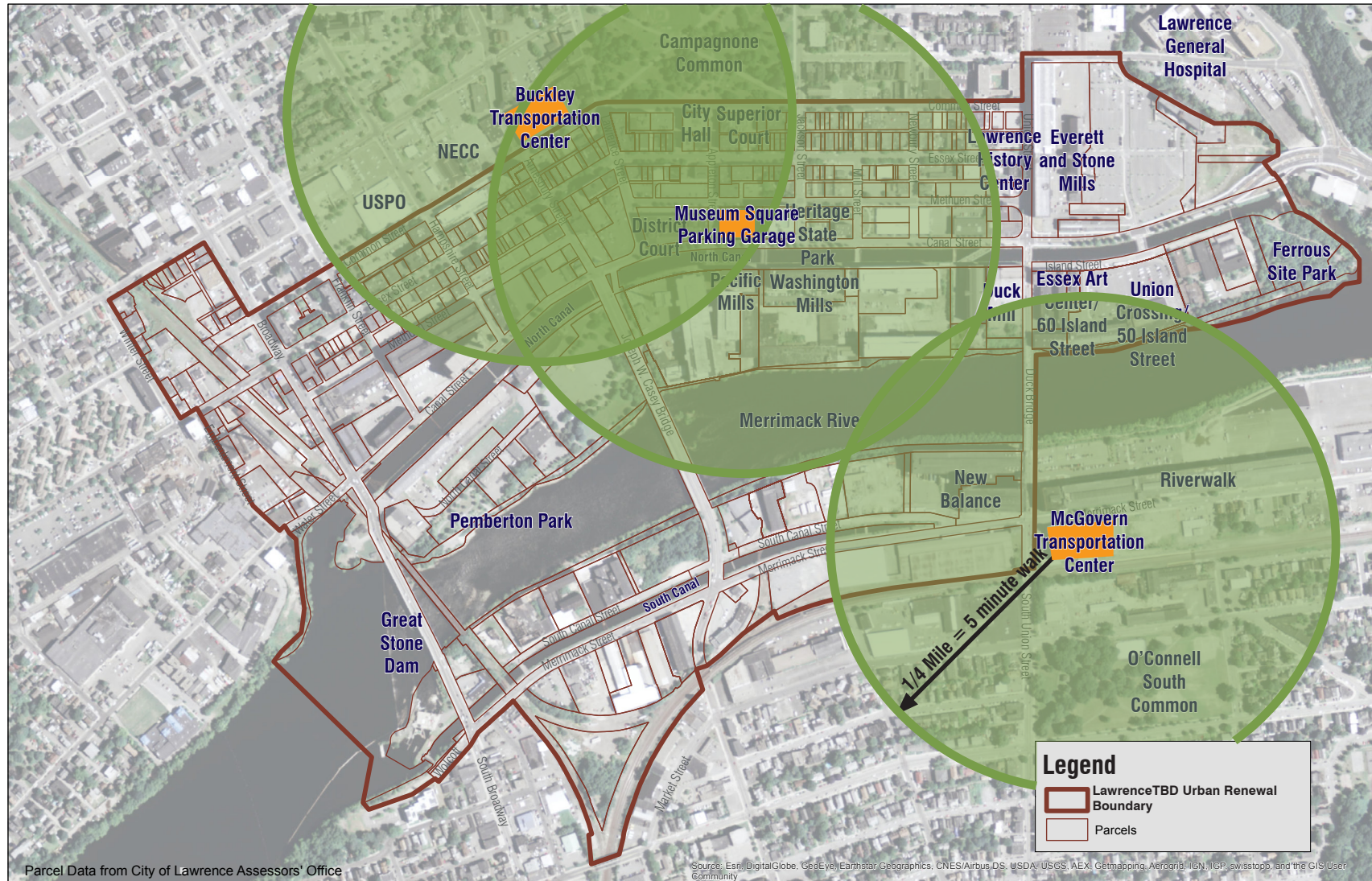


Figure 3-1: Location of existing parking garages and quarter-mile walk radius



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## 3.4 Proposed Regulatory Controls

The LRA will work with the City to implement regulatory actions that will affect property owners within the urban renewal area. These changes will provide a combination of incentives to encourage property owners to invest in their properties and controls on development that provide benefits to the community in terms of aesthetics and improvements to the public realm in both the urban renewal area and throughout the City.

The three actions are as follows:

- Undertake zoning changes
- Take advantage of state programs
- Establish design guidelines

### UNDERTAKE ZONING CHANGES

*Convert the RGO district within the urban renewal area to a 40R district and expand to*

*include the central/west islands and downtown west to Broadway; explore potential to use 40R payments for homeownership assistance programs.*

*Create a new Planned Industrial Corridor District for the Merrimack Street Corridor.*

*Link existing landscape ordinance to mitigation fund for tree planting citywide in connection with the City's recently enacted Complete Streets policy.*

This Urban Renewal Plan proposes three changes to the regulatory controls in the urban renewal area:

- Upgrade the RGO within the urban renewal area to a 40R district and expand the boundaries of that district to create a new Downtown Smart Growth Overlay (DSGO) District
- Establish a new Planned Industrial Development District (PIDD) for the Merrimack Street Corridor which would focus on light industrial and health/medical uses

- Link the existing landscape ordinance to a mitigation fund for tree planting

The goal of each of these changes is to improve the quality of life for the entire community by spreading the benefits from new development within the urban renewal area throughout the City.

Chapter 40R, often known as Smart Growth, is a program that creates financial incentives for municipalities to add more affordable housing near public transit facilities. The State provides a payment as each new unit is brought online within a cap established by legislation. 40R requires a minimum of 20% affordable housing units for each new development, minimum residential density per acre, and design standards. The City of Lawrence already has one 40R District – the Arlington Mills.

Developers may opt to use the 40R zoning; the underlying zoning (B-3 and I-2) remains in place. Developers will get relief on parking and density in exchange for the affordable units.



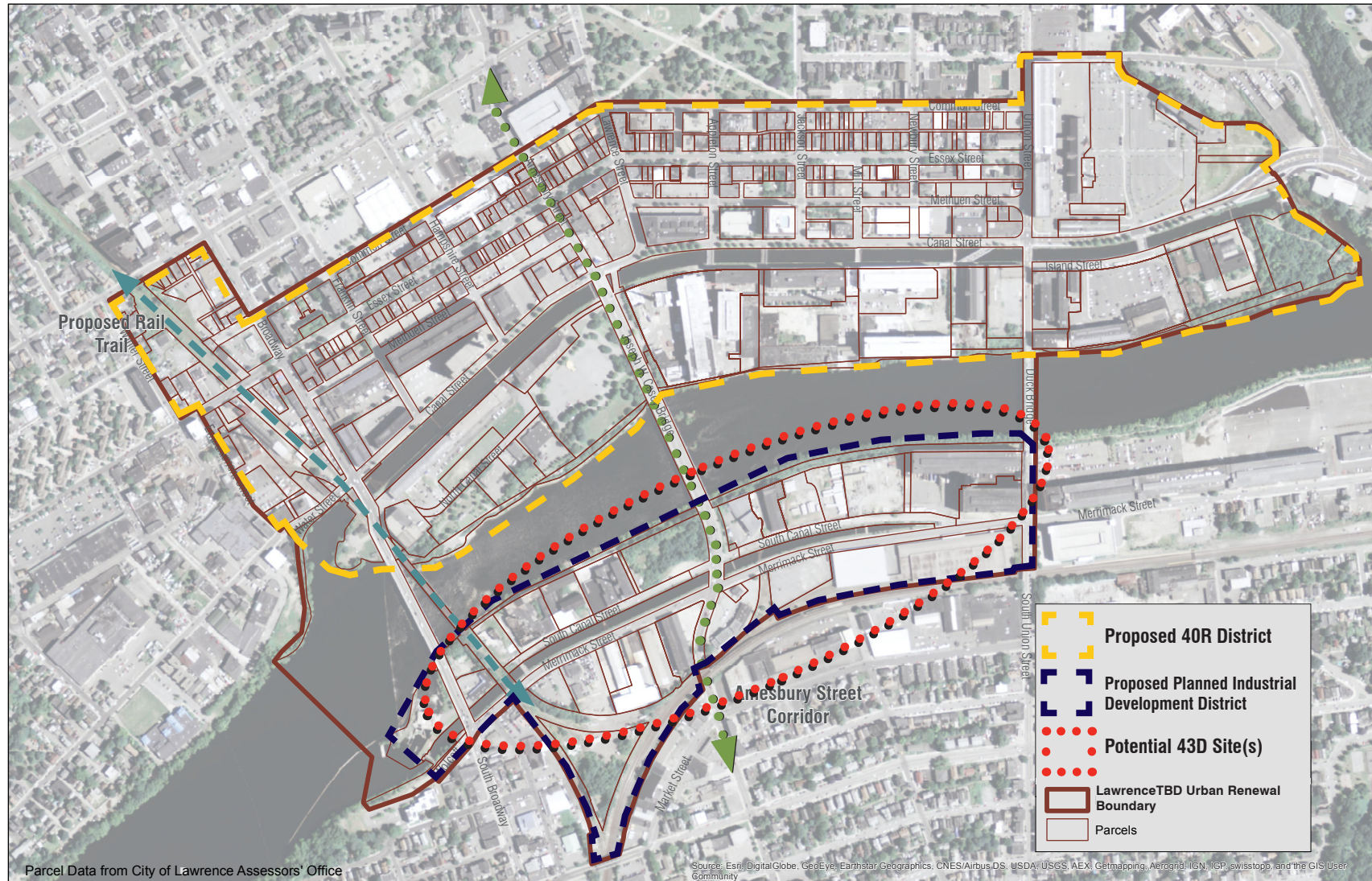


Figure 3-2: Proposed Zoning Changes and Location of Sites Eligible for Designation as 43D

Governing.com, a website that aggregates and displays data from cities throughout the United States, notes the low ownership of cars within the city. 26% of households do not own a car; the average number of vehicles per household is 1.1,\* less than the current parking ratios required by the City.

The second proposed zoning change is the introduction of a new zoning district – the Planned Industrial Development District or PIDD – for the Merrimack Street Corridor. The LRA would like to encourage those light industrial and health/medical uses that could be attracted to the corridor because of the larger lot sizes, available vacant land, and easy access from Merrimack Street to I-495 and the wider region. Of the five primary industries identified during this process – Food Manufacturing and Production, Specialty Manufacturing, Healthcare, Education, and Arts and Culture – the first three are

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\*<http://www.governing.com/gov-data/car-ownership-numbers-of-vehicles-by-city-map.html>, last accessed October 27, 2016

target industries for the proposed PIDD. Proposed uses and dimensional standards for the PIDD are compatible with these industries, and design standards emphasize the focus on new, energy-efficient facilities and site design that is consistent with the needs of the area and the abutting Merrimack River and South Canal.

The final proposed zoning change would be to link the requirements of the existing landscape ordinance to a mitigation fund for tree planting. Although the City requires trees to be planted as part of a new development, the historic mills were not landscaped originally, and trees are not generally required as part of the permitting process. However, the City recently enacted a Complete Streets policy, and could develop a mitigation fund to deposit fees in lieu of on-site planting for use in implementing that Complete Streets policy throughout the city.

The precise language for each of these changes is provided in *Appendix H Proposed Text for Zoning Changes*. The applicable area for each change is shown in Figure 3.2.

## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF STATE PROGRAMS

*Designate a site along the Merrimack Corridor for 43D Expedited Permitting to encourage food manufacturing uses.*

The LRA and the City should also consider working with one or more property owners to establish a site under the legislative requirements of Chapter 43D site. Such a site brings benefits to both the City and the property owner, including joint marketing of the property with the state.

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 43D is also known as Local Expedited Permitting. The Baker-Polito Administration is reviewing potential changes to this regulation.

The advantage to a developer of participating is that local permit reviews and final decisions must be accomplished within 180 days and both MassDevelopment and MassEcon (Massa-

chusetts Alliance for Economic Development) will help market the site.

According to DHCD, Lawrence has one participating 43D site at 280-350 Merrimack Street (Riverwalk).

MassEcon will market vacancies in their Ready-Mass 100 site, which lists properties throughout Massachusetts that are certified for immediate occupancy or development.

Lawrence has three sites listed on the Ready-Mass 100 site:

- Riverwalk at 280 Merrimack Street
- Everett Mills at 15 Union Street
- 94-104 Glenn Street

The site is <http://massecon.com/services/ready-mass100/>.

Developers whose sites meet the criteria (see sidebar) should work with the City to decide if being designated as a 43D site is appropriate

and to list their property with the appropriate state agencies. Sites on the Merrimack Street Corridor are most likely to be eligible for these programs, but some of the larger buildings elsewhere in the urban renewal area may also be eligible.

*“Priority development site”, a privately or publicly owned property that is: (1) eligible under applicable zoning provisions, including special permits or other discretionary permits, for the development or redevelopment of a building at least 50,000 square feet of gross floor area in new or existing buildings or structures; and (2) designated as an appropriate priority development site by the board. Several parcels or projects may be included within a single priority development site. Wherever possible, priority development sites should be located adjacent to areas of existing development or in underutilized buildings or facilities or close to appropriate transit services.*

*M.G.L. Chapter 43D*



The combination of a change in zoning, the LRA as a development partner, and the 43D designation could be a catalyst for this area.

## ESTABLISH DESIGN GUIDELINES

*Create design guidelines for urban renewal district to protect historic properties and ensure high-quality development.*

The design guidelines in this Urban Renewal Plan are split into three categories:

- Those guidelines that apply throughout the urban renewal area
- Guidelines that apply only to the Essex Street area (the area of the proposed DSGO District)
- Guidelines that apply only to the Merrimack Street area (the area of the proposed PIDDD)

The diagram in Figure 3-3 identifies the location of the Essex Street area and the Merrimack Street area. The boundary of the Essex Street area is the same as the boundary of the proposed 40R district. The boundary of the Merrimack

Street area is the same as that of the proposed Planned Industrial Development District. The design guidelines for the urban renewal area and these subdistricts are consistent with the design standards proposed as part of the recommended zoning changes.

This section includes the text of the design guidelines for both the Essex Street and Merrimack Street areas and the process for reviewing projects that are subject to these guidelines.

These guidelines are based on the current physical conditions in the urban renewal area. These conditions are discussed in more detail in *Section 1.6 Urban Design Characteristics*. Because of the relationship of the urban renewal area to the Merrimack River and the canals, the design guidelines include techniques for on-site stormwater management, including Low Impact Design (LID). Please see *Section 2.2 Determination of Conditions: Decadent Area* for a discussion of how improper stormwater management contributes to diminished water quality in the Merrimack River.

## Urban Design Principles for the City of Lawrence

To supplement the proposed design guidelines below, the City should consider the following actions:

### 1. URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Improve access and connectivity while creating design gateways into the downtown

- 1.1 Redesign roads to improve access and connectivity; use the opportunity to create distinctive and attractive North-South gateways into the downtown area (see Figure 3-3)

### 2. URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Work with property owners to remove billboards that detract from overall image and design character

- 2.1 Work with property owners and advertising companies to remove some of these billboards and improve the overall image and design character of the downtown



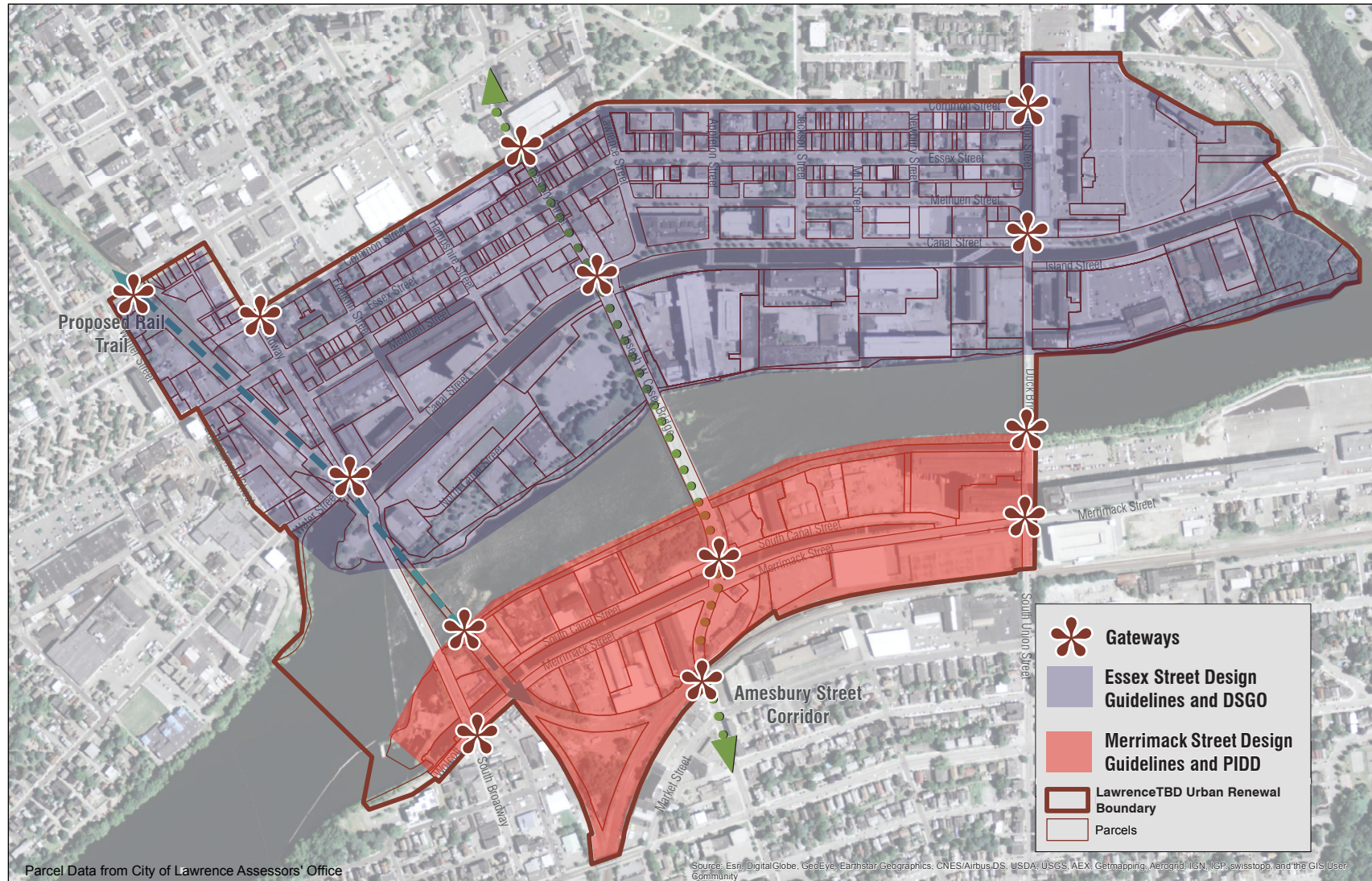


Figure 3-3: Areas Subject to Design Guidelines



## Design Inspirations Essex Street



SOURCE OF IMAGES: THE CECIL GROUP



## Design Inspirations Merrimack Street



SOURCE OF IMAGES: GOOGLE IMAGES

## Process

The Planning Board of the City of Lawrence shall use these design guidelines as part of their Site Plan Approval process for all projects within the urban renewal area that meet the review criteria. The Site Plan Approval process is outlined in Article VIII of the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Lawrence.

The Planning Board may request a liaison from the LRA and/or the Historical Commission to attend the relevant meetings and provide an advisory opinion to the Planning Board as to whether the application is consistent with the design guidelines.

## Applicability to Projects

Within the urban renewal area:

- All renovations of more than 50% of any exterior façade visible from public view are subject to Site Plan Approval

- All new development projects (demolition and new construction or new construction on a vacant lot) are subject to Site Plan Approval
- All projects located north of the Merrimack River are subject to the design guidelines for Essex Street (see Figure 3.3). These guidelines also apply to the proposed DSGO District.
- All projects located south of the Merrimack River are subject to the design guidelines for the Merrimack Street Corridor (see Figure 3.3) These guidelines also apply to the proposed PIDD.
- Project renderings
- 3-D model (physical or computer-generated, for larger developments, if appropriate)
- Photographs/Illustrations

## Application Requirements

The applicant must submit sufficient additional information to indicate how the application is in compliance with the design guidelines.

This information shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Narrative indicating how the project meets the guidelines
- Exterior elevations



## Design Guidelines

The following design guidelines are applicable throughout the urban renewal area, except where noted. Certain guidelines are only appropriate for the Essex Street area and others are only appropriate for the Merrimack Street area.

### 1. DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Preserve the architectural character and design features of historic buildings.

- 1.1 The original architectural character and design features of existing historic buildings shall be preserved by repairing them or replacing them with similar elements and materials; covering and hiding distinctive details and design features shall be avoided.
- 1.2 The shape and massing of new and renovated buildings shall provide a balance among building height, story-height, building width and bay width that is compatible with those of adjacent buildings, especially when the existing buildings

are historic or contribute to the historic character of the district.

- 1.3 Original window patterns and openings shall be preserved or restored in the redevelopment of historic buildings and buildings that contribute to the historic design character of the district, including conservation and repair to preserve historical trim and details.
- 1.4 Repairs and alterations in historic buildings shall not damage or destroy materials, features or finishes that are important in defining the building's historic character.
- 1.5 Old brick walls and elevations shall be cleaned and repointed to restore their original quality.
- 1.6 If sealing or painting is required, finishes and colors consistent with the building and the district historic character shall be used (e.g. the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation*).

### 2. DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Promote harmonious relationships of placement, massing, scale and proportions among neighboring buildings, independently of their particular design style and expression.

- 2.1 Building massing, scale and proportions shall be complementary to and respectful of the form patterns of existing buildings in the immediate vicinity, in order to generate a coherent public realm.
- 2.2 The building massing shall include one or more elements that relate building massing proportionally: articulated building bases through a change in material or treatment; placement of windows in a regular pattern; articulation of building entries with awnings; and façade and roof projections (e.g. bay windows, balconies, gables, dormers, etc.).
- 2.3 Architectural details, such as awnings, moldings, vertical piers, pilasters, and the size and location of door and window openings shall be used to relate the building design to the human scale, at least on all sides

of a building visible from a street or public way.

- 2.4 If there is a discrepancy greater than ten (10) feet between the proposed building height and the height patterns of adjacent existing buildings, the applicant shall submit design proposals for context sensitivity based upon articulation of façade, building mass, scale, bulk and proportions, or other building massing considerations.

- 2.5 Additions to existing buildings shall be set back, treated with a different material or incorporated into the roofline, in order to diminish building mass or to make a building more compatible with the design of adjacent buildings.

### Design Guidelines for Essex Street

- 2.6 At least two of the following design elements shall be repeated in adjacent buildings: design treatment at the ground level, relative location and size of doors and windows, win-

dow style and proportions, location of signs, dominant façade material, dominant color, cornice lines, and dominant roof form.

- 2.7 Infill buildings shall comply with front yard setbacks set by district regulations.
- 2.8 If one or more of the buildings adjacent to the proposed development are set back at a distance that exceeds the minimum front yard requirements, then the infill building shall match the setback from the front lot line of the immediately adjacent buildings. If the setbacks do not match, the infill building may match one or the other, or may be an average of the two setbacks.

### Design Guidelines for Merrimack Street

- 2.9 Mixed-use buildings shall include a combination of public uses on the ground floor and office or residential uses on upper floors. Public uses may include neighborhood retail, health care services, restaurants,

cafes, art galleries, exhibition space, community services, or other uses that may promote pedestrian activity along the street.

- 2.10 Mixed-use buildings shall be located along the front property line with their main elevation facing the street, in order to allow direct street access and visibility to the ground floor public uses.

### 3. DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Articulate building elevations with entrances, windows, or storefronts at the street level.

- 3.1 Buildings shall be oriented with the primary building façade(s) and main entrance(s) facing the primary street frontage(s) of the site.
- 3.2 Building massing and façades shall be designed to frame streets and public spaces, to provide a sense of spatial enclosure, and to define street edges.
- 3.3 Building façades, footprints and rooflines shall be articulated, in order to vary the streetscape and provide visual interest.

- 3.4 Variations in depth and direction of exterior wall planes (façades), window openings, contrasts between solid and void, and rhythmical patterns of architectural design elements may be employed to achieve the articulation required in 3.3.
- 3.5 Entrances shall provide a distinctive and welcoming composition that is integrated into the overall massing and design of the building.
- 3.6 Storefronts in commercial and mixed-use buildings shall be oriented to the primary street(s) with access, visibility, and transparency from streets and public spaces.
- 3.7 Windows on the ground floor of the primary façade of commercial and mixed-use buildings shall not use mirrored or tinted glass, and shall not be obstructed by blinds or solid panels.

#### Design Guidelines for Essex Street

- 3.8 The use of balconies and stoops in residential and mixed-use buildings is encouraged where feasible.
- 3.9 There shall be a direct vertical correspondence between the design of the façade of the upper floors and the ground level retail façades in commercial and mixed-use buildings.
- 3.10 Buildings with commercial use at the ground level shall have at least 40% of the ground floor façade in transparent windows and storefronts along primary elevations that face the street.
- 3.11 Buildings with commercial use at the ground level shall have at least 15% of the ground floor façade in transparent windows and storefronts along secondary elevations that face pedestrian alleys or connections.
- 3.12 Separate access to second story residential units shall be easily distin-

guished from retail and commercial entrances by location and design.

- 3.13 Building and shop entrances shall be recessed to a minimum depth equal to the width of the door to prevent doors from swinging into the sidewalk.
- 3.14 Residential and mixed-use buildings shall provide adequate privacy for on-site residential units and units on adjacent properties by placing public rooms closer to pedestrian ways than private rooms, and using streetscape or plantings to screen the windows of private areas.

#### Design Guidelines for Merrimack Street

- 3.15 The length of any continuous wall along a building's façade facing a street shall not exceed 40% of the façade's total length, or 60 horizontal feet, whichever is less, without incorporating at least two of the following: color change, material change, texture change, and/or projections or recesses of storefronts,

doors or windows from the wall plane (façade).

- 3.16 Landscaping shall be used to mitigate the impact of blank walls on the sidewalk and moderate exterior temperature and wind.

**4. DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Promote the use of building technologies, materials, and methods consistent with the purpose of the district.**

- 4.1 Site and building design concepts shall be supportive of green building principles, materials and methods, in order to promote energy conservation and minimize greenhouse gas emissions.
- 4.2 Building façade exterior materials, including architectural trim and cladding, shall be of high quality and durable, including but not limited to: stone, brick, wood shingles or clapboard, wood trim, metal, glass, and integrated or textured masonry.
- 4.3 Synthetic siding materials and materials on the façade that are subject

to deterioration (exterior insulation finishing systems, plywood, or plastic) shall be avoided or removed and replaced with more durable materials (wood shingles, clapboard, brick, or metal).

- 4.4 Exterior materials shall not include vinyl or aluminum siding.

**Design Guidelines for Essex Street**

**DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Promote the use of building technologies, materials, and methods consistent with historic preservation and the adaptive reuse of existing buildings.**

- 4.5 Old building façades and storefronts shall be renovated in a manner consistent with the historic design character and the architectural quality of historic period styles typical of Essex Street and the downtown.
- 4.6 Uninterrupted, multi-level glazing shall not be used as a primary façade design treatment.
- 4.7 Roofing materials visible from public sidewalks or streets shall be of

high quality and durable, including, but not limited to: slate, copper, ceramic slate tile, or architectural asphalt shingle.

**Design Guidelines for Merrimack Street**

**DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Promote the use of building technologies, materials, and methods reflective of contemporary design and innovative architectural expression in the design of new buildings.**

- 4.8 Whenever possible, glazing shall be used on the exterior façade to provide visual openness and to highlight manufacturing processes and equipment. Such transparency should be visible from a place accessible to the public, either a public way, plaza or other open space provided for public use.
- 4.9 The redevelopment of vacant and underutilized sites shall be promoted with the intent of attracting innovative industries and emerging technologies that will generate a



- new image and perception for the future of Lawrence.
- 4.10 Wherever practical, stormwater from roof surfaces of buildings shall be infiltrated into the ground either by directing runoff to pervious areas or by directing water to basins containing water treatment facilities through the use of green roofs or through direct underground recharge.
- 4.11 Surface runoff shall be directed into infiltration-based systems when feasible.
- 4.12 Low-impact design techniques (including rain gardens) as contributing landscape elements of the site drainage and stormwater management systems shall be used to reduce stormwater runoff from sites adjacent to the Merrimack River and the North and South Canals.
- 4.13 Building façade exterior materials, may also include sustainable cement masonry board products.

- 4.14 Roof materials may include standing seam roof panels.
- 5. DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Coordinate sign design, type, and location to avoid visual clutter.**
- 5.1 Sign design, types, and location within a building façade shall be coordinated to avoid redundancy and cluttering of competing information, while promoting a harmonious relationship between signage and architectural design elements.
- 5.2 Zones for the location of signs shall be established on the front of the building in a manner that fits within the main compositional elements and proportions of the façade (e.g. sign bands or awnings that fit between vertical elements such as columns or pilasters, and other determined locations on the building façade).
- 5.3 Signs displaying business or product names and logos shall be directly associated with the principal service or products of the establishment.

- 5.4 Signs shall present a clear message and be well-designed to complement the architectural character of the building in style and placement.
- 5.5 Building signs shall have simple geometric shapes with two or three colors to complement the colors of the building.

Design Guidelines for Essex Street

- 5.6 Signs on storefronts shall be located at the same height on the building façade, preferably on a sign band or with awnings.
- 5.7 A sign band shall be a space clearly defined by architectural elements, trim or moldings, where signs may be placed above the storefront windows.
- 5.8 Signs and awnings on a single building shall be consistent in size, profile, location, material, color and design; they may not obscure important architectural details by crossing over pilasters, or covering windows or trim elements.

- 5.9 Window signs, such as informational signs (e.g. hours of operation, sales info, etc.) shall be either high quality vinyl die cut letters or painted directly onto the glass.
- 5.10 All window signs combined, including temporary signs, should not cover more than 10% of the total glass area.
- 5.11 Projecting signs shall be allowed only for retail uses, and shall convey information in a unique and artistic way, using images that convey the goods or services provided at the premises.
- 5.12 Projecting signs shall hang below the sill height of the second floor, or the roof cornice (whichever is lower).
- 5.13 Projecting signs shall not be lower than eight (8) feet or project more than five (5) feet.
- 5.14 Signs located above the building top cornice or roofline shall be avoided.

#### Design Guidelines for Merrimack Street

- 5.15 Ground signs shall use durable and high quality materials, such as wood, metal, and stone piers.
- 5.16 Attractive landscaping shall be provided around the base of a ground sign in order to enhance its image and surroundings.
- 5.17 Single pole signs, and the use of exposed structural supports for freestanding signs, shall be avoided.
- 5.18 Neon and flashing signs are prohibited.
- 5.19 Ground-mounted flag and banner signs are prohibited.

#### 6. DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Consolidate mechanical equipment away or screened from public view.

- 6.1 HVAC systems shall be consolidated throughout the building to integrate and optimize the use of energy. HVAC equipment shall be placed on the rooftop, out of sight or screened from public view.

- 6.2 If consolidation is not possible, the design of the roof, façade or storefront shall conceal appliances from public vantage points.

#### Design Guidelines for Essex Street

- 6.3 Roll-up security doors and shutters shall be placed behind the storefront, or storefronts shall be designed to conceal rolling security screens within architectural design elements such as soffits or encase-ments.

#### Design Guidelines for Merrimack Street

- 6.4 Decorative walls, evergreen foliage, shrubs, fencing or other view-obstructing materials shall be used to conceal site mechanical, electrical, communications equipment and meters from public view.
- 6.5 New site utilities (except stormwater and wastewater treatment facilities that require above-grade access) shall be installed underground.

**7. DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Create outdoor sitting areas and landscaped parking lot edges to enhance the pedestrian environment.**

- 7.1 Sites and parking edges shall be landscaped to create green areas and landscape buffers that screen the view of parked vehicles from the street.
- 7.2 Design amenities, such as outdoor sitting areas, fences, benches or trees, shall be included to make the site more attractive and enhance the pedestrian environment.
- 7.3 Bicycle racks shall be provided on-site at locations that may attract customers and visitors, such as the sidewalks in front of mixed-use buildings.

**Design Guidelines for Essex Street**

- 7.4 Brick, granite, or unit pavers shall be used to enhance the character of sidewalks, pathways, and outdoor sitting areas.
- 7.5 When employed, unit pavers shall be selected and set in a manner that

limits uneven surfaces or joints that would become an impediment to accessibility.

- 7.6 Bicycle storage facilities for residents shall be incorporated into the design of new residential and mixed-use buildings.

**Design Guidelines for Merrimack Street**

- 7.7 New construction and site infrastructure shall reinforce a network of continuous, convenient, and safe pedestrian connections along sidewalks to and from all pedestrian entrances.
- 7.8 Projects that include more than one building in their site plan shall design an internal circulation network incorporating walking, bicycling, and driving. Motor vehicle circulation shall be designed to avoid conflicts with pedestrians and bicycles.
- 7.9 Driveways, bikeways, sidewalks, and pedestrian paths shall incorporate appropriate lighting, landscaping, and signage.

**8. DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Ensure that exterior illumination is the minimum required for pedestrian and vehicular safety, while protecting neighboring properties from glare and light overspill.**

- 8.1 Outdoor illuminating devices, lighting practices, and systems which minimize light pollution and conserve energy, while also maintaining reasonable nighttime safety and security, shall be used.
- 8.2 Site lighting shall be set at a low luminaire height (bottom of fixture not higher than 12-14 feet for pedestrian areas, and 18-20 feet for parking lots).
- 8.3 Light fixtures shall be of the “cut-off” variety, projecting all light down towards the pavement (less than 90 degrees from the vertical line).
- 8.4 Decorative fixtures do not need to be of the cut-off variety, but shall be equipped with interior reflectors or shields that directs light at the desired target.

- 8.5 The use of LED fixtures and solar-powered lights shall be used whenever possible.

**9. DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Locate parking and loading areas behind buildings.**

- 9.1 Parking areas shall be located on the interior of blocks, behind buildings, or at the rear of sites, away from prominent site edges, public spaces, and streets.
- 9.2 Parking areas visible from the street shall be screened from street view by fences, gates, walls, landscaping, permanent planters, hedges or combinations of these elements.
- 9.3 Loading and dumpster areas shall be located to the rear or side of buildings, whenever possible, and shall be screened from public view by landscape buffers, fences, walls, or a combination of thereof.

**Design Guidelines for Essex Street**

- 9.4 Structured parking or parking either sub-grade or on the first level of multi-family buildings shall be used

where feasible, in order to minimize impervious surfaces and reduce the overall impact of parking lots.

- 9.5 When structured parking is incorporated into residential buildings, it shall be properly screened from public view by publicly accessible ground floor uses and designed to complement the building façade and the adjacent streetscape.
- 9.6 Large parking lots are discouraged, but where necessary, they shall incorporate landscaping in the form of trees or vegetated aisles or swales, and include safe passage for pedestrians across and along the side of parking areas.
- 9.7 The combined minimum size for vegetated aisles shall be no less than 5% of the entire parking lot area.
- 9.8 Whenever a site has frontage on more than one street, parking and garage entrances shall be located on a secondary road or traveled way.

**Design Guidelines for Merrimack Street**

- 9.10 Loading areas and service entrances shall be located to the rear or the side of the building, and adequate space and clearances shall be provided for the maneuvering of trucks and delivery vehicles.
- 9.11 Landscape buffers shall include at least two of the following components: evergreens, deciduous trees, shrubs, berms, fences, green walls, and decorative walls.

**10. DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Improve sidewalks to provide universal access (ADA).**

- 10.1 All site planning and building design for new construction and alterations shall comply with the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA Standards for Accessible Design) and the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board.
- 10.2 Sidewalks shall be built in places where they are missing, and extensions added to widen stretches of



sidewalk that prevent universal access according to ADA standards.

Design Guidelines for Merrimack Street

- 10.3 Sidewalks in front of buildings with commercial or public use on the ground floor shall have a minimum width of eight feet (8') and include pedestrian amenities such as trees or decorative planters.
- 10.4 Curb cuts shall be minimized and combined whenever possible into one main access point per property, depending on needs for truck and emergency access.
- 10.5 Curb cuts and driveways of adjacent properties may be combined into one shared access point, subject to design review.
- 10.6 In general, curb cuts shall not exceed twenty-four feet (24') in width measured at the point of tangency with the driveway curb radius.

11. DESIGN PRINCIPLE: Landscape sites for pedestrian comfort, visual attractiveness, and management of stormwater.

- 11.1 The provision of trees and other landscape material shall be governed by *Article XIII Landscape Regulations for Land Development Projects* of the City's *Zoning Ordinance*, as amended.
- 11.2 Stormwater management shall conform to the Stormwater Management Policies of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, the stormwater management standards of the City of Lawrence, and the requirements of the Consent Decree between the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the City of Lawrence.

Application of Design Guidelines  
**Essex Street**



Source Image: Google Maps / Photoshop by The Cecil Group



Source Image: Google Maps

Application of Design Guidelines  
**Merrimack Street Corridor**



*Source Image: and Photoshop by The Cecil Group*



*Source Image: The Cecil Group*



## 3.5 Other Regulatory Actions

The LRA will work with the City and other partners to implement other actions that have regulatory implications – the creation of a National Register Historic District to cover the gap along Essex Street and the modification of the permitting process to make it more navigable and transparent, particularly for smaller businesses.

### CREATE AN ESSEX STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

*Commission historic district study and prepare federal historic district application for Essex Street.*

The Downtown Lawrence Historic District (listed on the National Register of Historic Places) covers only a portion of Essex Street. Figure 3-4 indicates where the gap is between the existing patchwork of districts with a dashed yellow line

and fill. This area should be evaluated to see if it is eligible for inclusion in the National Register.

The historic character of Essex Street and the mills is important for many reasons: as a visual reminder of the community's shared past, as a contributing factor to the sense of place that defines great spaces, and as an economic asset that has value to, among others, the film industry and tourism. Recent filming in Lawrence includes movies directed by Ben Affleck ("Live by Night" in 2015) and Kathryn Bigelow (untitled movie in 2016).

Establishing an historic district would allow property owners to apply for Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits and the Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (the "federal tax credit" and "state tax credit") to help them rehabilitate their buildings. The federal tax credit is 20% on the rehabilitation of income-producing historic buildings. The state tax credit has been extended to December 31, 2022 and there is an annual cap of \$50 million. The state tax credit may be up to 20% of the Quali-

fied Rehabilitation Expenses and Total Project Costs.

A number of larger projects in Lawrence have been recipients of the Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit, including the following:

- The Wood Worsted Mill
- Washington Mill
- Union Crossing
- Duck Mill
- Pacific Mills

To be eligible for both tax credits, the development must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. This will benefit the community by upgrading the exteriors of the buildings and will address many of the existing design problems noted earlier.

Additional information about the federal tax credit can be found at: <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/>. Additional information about



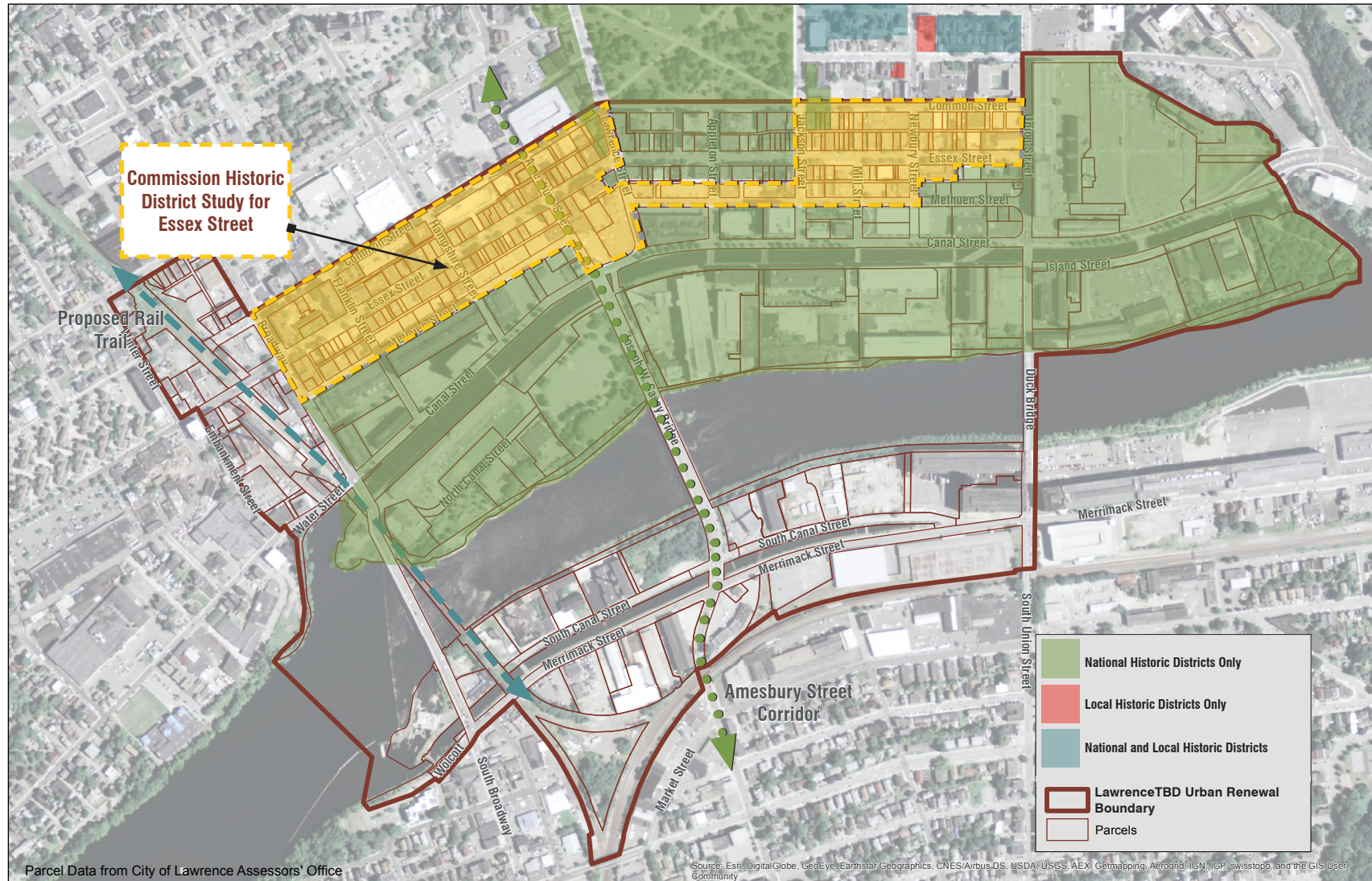


Figure 3-4: Possible boundary of proposed National Register Historic District

the state tax credit can be found here: <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhctax/taxidx.htm>.

Should the City choose to make a new or expanded district a local historic district, the City could have additional controls over what happens to historic buildings within the area. This level of control would benefit the community by protecting the historic assets that contribute to the unique sense of place that grew out of Lawrence's history as a planned city.

Steps to consider this area as an historic district will include taking an inventory of the area. The information found in this plan and the Appendices can contribute to this effort.

More information about creating a National Register District can be found here: <https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/guidance.htm>.

## REFINING THE PERMITTING PROCESS

*Prepare a bilingual guide to zoning, design guidelines, and permitting requirements in the urban renewal area.*

*Establish a process for convening a one-stop pre-permitting meeting with City Boards/ Commissions and Department Heads to review larger projects proposed in the District and provide feedback to project proponents.*

In order to make the process of obtaining building permits and development approval easier, especially for developers of smaller projects, this plan recommends two actions:

- Creating a bilingual guide (English and Spanish) to the permitting and development process in the City
- Standardizing a coordinated pre-application meeting with department heads and City Boards and Commissions

Both actions would improve the efficiency, transparency and predictability of the regulatory process. Both of these initiatives would be led by City staff with the participation of the relevant elected officials.

### 3.6 760 CMR 12.02 (7): Public Improvements

The public improvements envisioned for the urban renewal area support the goals expressed in the vision statement that are related to increased economic development and quality of life.

The proposed improvements reflect input from members of the public and initiatives already undertaken by the City; such initiatives are indications of the City's current priorities. A primary goal of these public improvements is to strengthen the connections across the Merrimack River, recognizing the importance of Amesbury Street as a connecting element between Essex Street to the north and the Merrimack Street corridor to the south.

The proposed improvements are as follows:

- Improve the pedestrian experience
- Establish a new MVRTA Shuttle Loop

Where the river was once the center of economic engine of the City, it is now seen as a barrier. Improving the pedestrian experience and the vehicular circulation throughout the urban renewal area will encourage people to see the Merrimack River as the central core of the district rather than a barrier to be crossed. The Casey Bridge is recognized by this plan as the link between the center of the downtown and the center of the Merrimack Street area; and as an access point to Pemberton Park. Public input has identified an expanded Pemberton Park as a central destination between the areas north and south of the river.

#### IMPROVE THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

*Design and install new lighting and/or public art on the Casey (Amesbury Street) Bridge.*

*Paint and clean Buckley Garage façade.*

*Create an attractive walking loop that links the North and South Canals.*

*Link the proposed Rail Tail to other pedestrian and bicycle improvements.*

*Construct streetscape improvements throughout the urban renewal area in the long term and along Merrimack and Amesbury Streets in the short term.*

Pedestrian improvements are critical to ensuring the north-south movement of people across the Merrimack River and canals. The Duck Bridge and the Broadway Bridge have already been improved. The Casey Bridge is an important link between the north and the south of the river and becomes a critical piece of the proposed North Canals/South Canal walking loop. Amesbury Street would be a logical connecting route and tie into the City's reapplication for the TIGER grant. Another cross-river link may be the rail trail that is under consideration as part of the Manchester Rail Corridor Brownfields Area-Wide Plan.

## ESTABLISH A NEW MVRTA SHUTTLE LOOP

*Establish a new MVRTA shuttle loop connecting train station, bus terminal, public parking facilities, downtown Lawrence and Merri-mack Street corridor.*

The City has already begun investigating the possibility of a shuttle loop between the Buckley Transportation Center (bus) and the McGovern Transportation Center (rail). This proposed loop, which could also connect other stops in the urban renewal area, would be a valuable addition to public transportation in the urban renewal area.

Members of the CAC explored possible routes for the shuttle; these routes are shown in Figure 3-5.



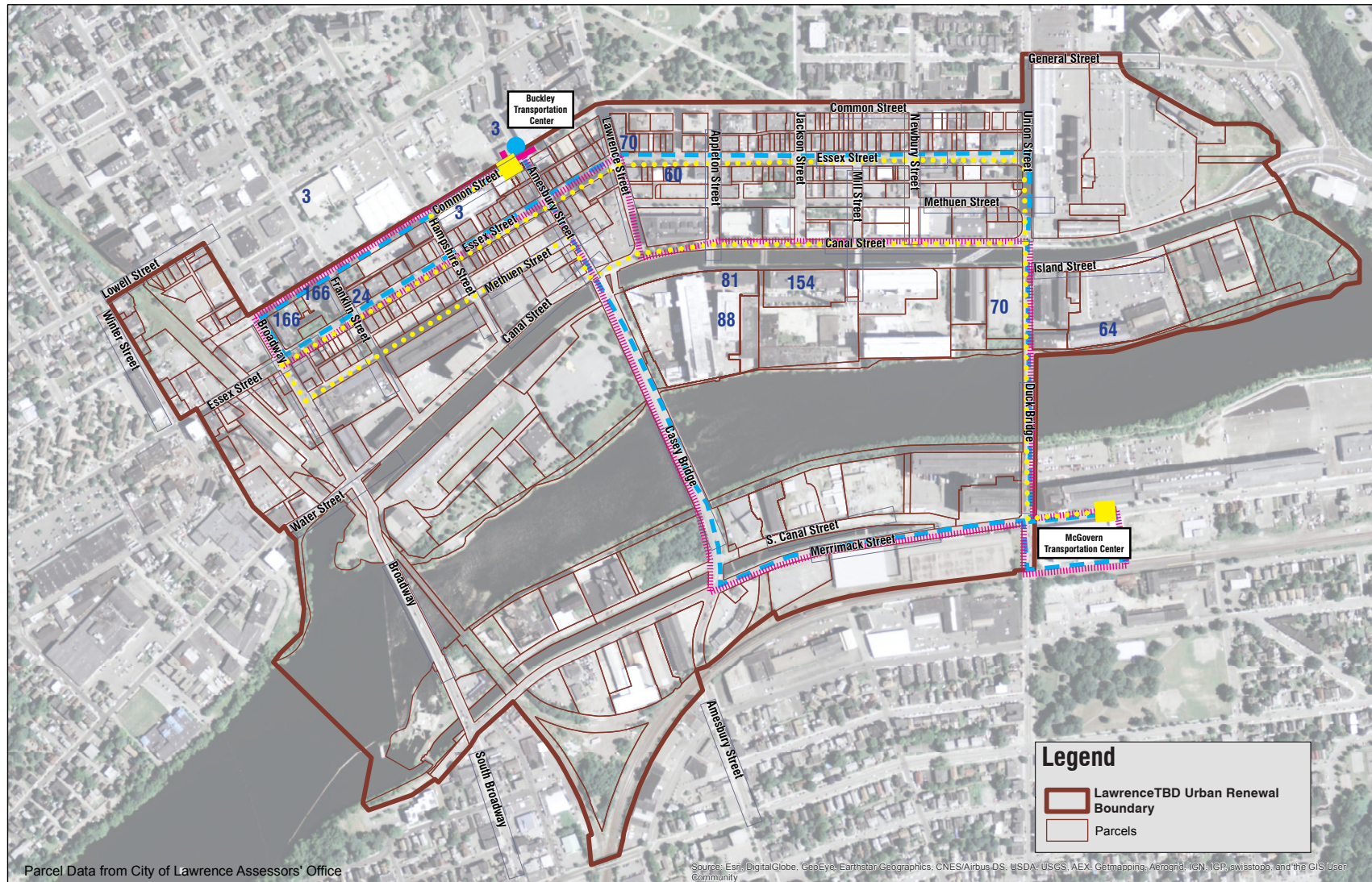


Figure 3-5: Possible routes for a new MVTRA shuttle

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### 3.7 760 CMR 12.02 (6): Site Preparation

Section 760 CMR 12.02(6) requires that measures to address environmental conditions, including hazardous materials, likely flooding, and any other specific land protection problems, should be identified in this section. There are few vacant lots within the urban renewal area. Most anticipated development is likely to be rehabilitation or renovation of existing buildings or infill development. However, there are some vacant areas of land, particularly to the south of the Merrimack River, that may be developed in the future.

This plan anticipates that smaller parcels may be assembled by developers and the buildings and site cleared prior to redevelopment.

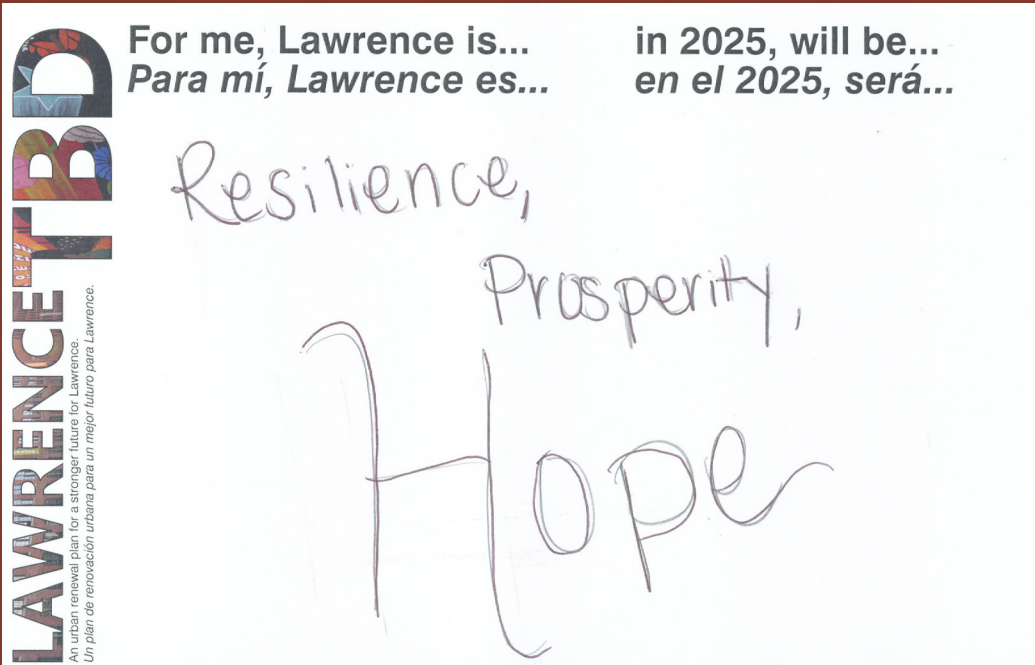
The location of these parcels in an urban environment suggests the presence of those hazardous materials that are standard with older build-

ing stock (see Figure 2-4) – lead paint, asbestos, and the build-up of material related to previous uses, such as fuel spills. Rehabilitation and renovation activities will need to address these conditions, as will redevelopment activities when a building and site are being cleared for reuse.

Certain brownfields have been identified within the urban renewal area, and these brownfields are in different states of remediation. The most obvious example is the Merrimack Paper property, the site of a fire and subsequent, and ongoing, remediation efforts. Figure 2-1 provides the location of known brownfield sites.

Brownfields have different required levels of remediation depending on the proposed use of the site, with residential uses generally requiring a higher level of remediation than industrial uses. The cost of remediation for potential development within the urban renewal area will therefore depend on both the level of contamination and the proposed future use.

Flooding is also a problem. Figure 2-2 shows the boundaries of the flood zones in the urban renewal area. The properties and buildings along the Merrimack River are at risk of damage from flood waters. Redevelopment of properties within these zones must address these conditions to prevent future blighted conditions as a result of flood damage and accompanying problems, such as the growth of mold on susceptible surfaces. The walls that define the North and South Canals should be monitored to evaluate their impact on flooding from leaks in the canal walls in the area. Figure 2-3 identifies the buildings that abut the canals.



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## 4. FINANCIAL PLAN



## 4 Financial Plan

### 4.1 760 CMR 12.02 (4): Financial Plan

12.02(4) requires six categories of information related to the undertaking of specific projects. The categories are as follows:

- (a) Estimated Cost of Acquisition
- (b) Detailed Cost Estimates for Site Preparation
- (c) Detailed Cost Estimates for All Proposed Public Improvements
- (d) Detailed Cost Estimates for Relocation Expenses
- (e) Detailed Cost Estimates Establishing the Gross and Net Project Cost
- (f) Project Budget (including Contingencies)

This financial plan is tied to the categories of actions (A-D) identified in the Executive Summary and detailed in *Section 3 Objectives*. Where appropriate, the cost estimates for each category of action are tied to DHCD's categories, listed above.

#### (A) PROPERTY ACQUISITION, PERMITTING, AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

The LRA is considering acquiring four categories of parcels over time:

- Parcels by purchase or donation for street improvements
- Parcels currently owned by the City by purchase or direct transfer
- Parcels that are in or anticipated to be in the tax title process undertaken by the City for parcels with significant tax liens
- One or more privately-owned parcels on Essex Street for a catalyst project as defined in *Section 3 Objectives*

Prior to acquisition, the LRA must conduct an appraisal of the property. 760 CMR 12.04 requires two appraisals for acquisitions. This plan would be amended by a major plan update and the initial appraisal must be included

in the updated materials. See *Section 6.5 760 CMR 12.03: Process for Future Plan Changes*. No appraisals are included in this Urban Renewal Plan as no properties have been identified for acquisition. The current assessed value as determined by the City is shown in Figure 1-9C in *Section 1 Characteristics*.

As part of that amendment, the LRA must also identify any property in which any officer or employee of the municipality or of the LRA has, or is believed to have, any direct or indirect interest.



**(a) Estimated Cost of Acquisition**

ACQUISITIONS	ESTIMATED COSTS
Street Improvements	Negotiation on a parcel-by-parcel basis
City-owned parcels	Negotiation on a parcel-by-parcel basis
Tax Title	City to obtain, negotiation on a parcel-by-parcel basis
Feasibility Studies (by project)	\$35,000-70,000

Funding sources for acquisition include Mass-Development, MassWorks, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), and private sources of equity. The LRA is also authorized to issue bonds.

Calculations from data provided by the City indicate that the assessed value of the parcels on

which there are current liens is approximately \$4.3 million. The amount of the tax liens on those parcels in June 2016 was approximately \$7.8 million, including \$5 million on one site.

The cost of potential development projects is discussed separately within this section.

**(B) REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND INCENTIVES**

The impact of the LRA's activities is expected to be primarily regulatory within the first 3-5 years. The LRA and City staff should consider whether additional funds beyond their respective operating budgets would be required to implement the proposed regulatory changes.

REGULATORY	ESTIMATED COSTS
43D Process	\$4,000-8,000

Funding sources include the operating budgets of the Office of Planning and Development and property owners.

**(C) FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR PROPERTY OWNERS**

The cost of the historic district study could be covered by a partnership of public and private entities interested in historic preservation. Other sources include grants from local, state, or national nonprofits who are interested in community development for the bilingual guide. Pre-permitting meetings would be funded from the operating budget of the Office of Planning and Development.

ASSISTANCE	ESTIMATED COSTS
Historic District Study	\$30-50,000
Bilingual Permitting Guide	\$20-30,000
Process for Pre-Permitting Meetings	Within current City budgets

## (D) TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

The City has applied for two grants for streetscape and other public infrastructure improvements. If the grants are awarded, they would impact on the urban renewal area within the first five years.

The first application was for a MassWorks grant to continue streetscape improvements along the entire Merrimack Street corridor.

The City also applied for a TIGER grant for the Amesbury Street Corridor, a critical corridor linking the subareas of the urban renewal area. The request was for \$8 million and assumed \$2 million in matching funds. The grant was denied, but the City intends to reapply.

## (c) Detailed Cost Estimates for All Proposed Public Improvements

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS	ESTIMATED COSTS
Merrimack Street Corridor (MassWorks application)	\$5.95 million
Amesbury Street Corridor (TIGER application)	\$10 million

Additional streetscape improvements are anticipated in Phases II and III. City staff have indicated that the City's Chapter 90 appropriation could be used to fund those improvements over time.

## PROJECT COSTS

The LRA anticipates a few physical projects within the first 3-5 years. These include painting the Buckley Garage, lighting the Amesbury Bridge, establishing the MVTRA shuttle loop, and public improvements to the streetscape

along Merrimack Street and the Amesbury Street corridors.

Estimates for projects in Phase II (5-10 years) and Phase III (10-20 years) would not be accurate at this stage, however, a project budget has been provided in *Section 4.2 Project Budget* that estimates a range of costs per project. Should the LRA wish to undertake the expansion of Pemberton Park or the redevelopment of the Merrimack Paper Site, it would need to undertake a specific planning process that would include the development of the relevant costs.

The following costs are relevant to the physical development of a specific project rather than the costs noted above for actions related to acquisition, regulatory changes, assistance to property owners, transportation, and public infrastructure. DHCD provides a guidance document for the preparation of an urban renewal plan that supplements the regulatory requirements of 760 CMR 12.00. The guidance provided for this section indicates that the Massachusetts Legislature may provide a grant under the Urban

Revitalization Development Grant Program (URDG). The grant may cover up to 50% of net project costs and is paid in twenty annual installments.

In FY2014, there was a bond cap of \$3,695,806 for the URDG program. For FY2017, the amount was \$1,168,306.

As part of the process of developing this Urban Renewal Plan, the consultant team undertook an analysis of test scenarios for different project types with the urban renewal area. The full report is provided in *Appendix C: Feasibility Analyses for a Lawrence 40R Overlay District and 370 Essex Street*.

These scenarios indicated that the costs for a catalyst project in the proposed 40R District might range between \$4.9 million for the rehabilitation of a small building of twenty units to \$36.8 million for a hundred-unit building that used certain tax credits. In most of the scenarios, financing sources such as grants and tax credits would be required to cover the gap between the

cost of development and the amount available as equity. Debt would be supported by the income stream from the development.

The LRA is continuing to investigate catalyst projects on Essex Street and along the Merimack Street Corridor. The LRA will need to undertake additional studies; once those studies are complete and the LRA has decided on a particular project, this Urban Renewal Plan should be updated with the relevant information required by this section so that the project will be eligible for a grant under the URDG program.

#### **(b) Detailed Cost Estimates for Site Preparation**

For a specific project, the LRA would be required to include those costs related to the site preparation for the proposed project. This could include environmental remediation of the site or the cost to remove structures, paving, or other physical elements that would not be part of the proposed new construction.

#### **d) Detailed Cost Estimates for Relocation Expenses**

This plan does not include a relocation plan as there is no anticipated project that would displace existing dwelling or business units. The current intent of the LRA is to focus on vacant lots and buildings.

A project that requires a relocation plan under M.G.L. Chapter 79A would require a major plan update to amend this plan. The LRA would need to file a separate relocation plan that conforms to M.G.L. Chapter 79A and any related regulations and guidelines as noted in *Section 6.6 760 CMR 12.02 (8): Relocation*; the estimated cost of such plan would be added as part of a major plan amendment to this Urban Renewal Plan (see *Section 6.5 760 CMR 12.03: Process for Future Plan Changes*).

### **(e) Detailed Cost Estimates Establishing the Gross and Net Project Cost**

12.02(4) defines the gross project cost as follows:

- The total of all costs associated with the project, including, but not limited to: planning, acquisition and disposition of land, relocation of occupants, improvements to the site, financing, and administrative costs.

12.02(4) defines the net project cost as follows:

- The gross project cost less revenue anticipated from disposition of land and other income.

For the public actions anticipated in Phase I of this plan, the total cost of the additional studies and the permitting guide would range between \$89,000 and \$158,000. The total cost of the proposed infrastructure improvements to the Merrimack Street Corridor (MassWorks) and the Amesbury Street Corridor (TIGER, if approved) would be \$15.95 million.

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## **4.2 Project Budget**

### **(f) Project Budget**

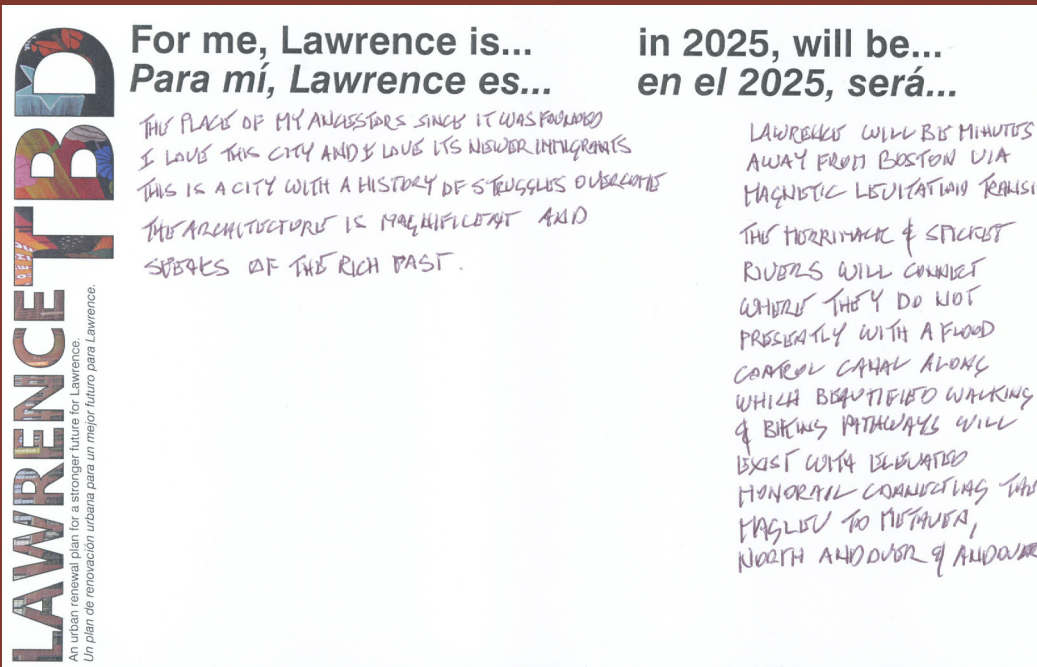
The project budget should include administrative expenses and allowances for contingencies. The budget should also indicate the sources of funds for the project.

The estimate to the right is a range estimated on a per project basis. The LRA has not identified a specific project within this Urban Renewal Plan. The project budget is intended to give an idea of the range of financing required, depending on the size and scope of the project. Estimates are based on the scenarios provided in *Appendix C: Feasibility Analyses for a Lawrence 40R Overlay District and 370 Essex Street*.



PUBLIC ACTION	TOTAL ESTIMATED COST	CURRENT FUNDING	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
<b>Development Project</b>			
<b>Land Acquisitions</b>			
Land Acquisition	\$0.5m - \$2m per project	None	Senior Debt, Workforce Housing Fund, Federal and State Historic Tax Credits, New Markets Tax Credits, Low Income Housing Tax Credit Equity
Appraisals	\$5k - \$12k per project	None	
Legal Costs	\$5k - \$25k per project		
<b>Relocation Costs</b>			
Relocation Plan	\$5k - \$50k per project	None	
Relocation Payments	TBD	None	
<b>Rehabilitation Costs</b>			
Rehabilitation Costs	\$3.5m - \$21.5 m	None	
<b>Demolition and Site Preparation</b>			
Demolition	\$0.25m - \$1m per project	None	
Site Preparation	TBD	None	
Remediation	TBD	None	
<b>Administrative</b>			
Legal	\$5k - \$25k per project	None	
Administration/Staff	\$5k - \$25k per project	None	
Fees (Bonds Fees, Misc. Fees)		None	
Contingency (20%)	\$0.85 - 5m per project	None	
<b>Total Estimated Project Costs</b>	\$5m - \$26m per project		
Income from Sale or Lease (Estimated)	TBD	None	
<b>Net Project Cost</b>	\$5m - \$26m per project		
Current Funding	0		
Grants (Future)	\$0.4m per project		Workforce Housing Fund
<b>Total Estimated Funding Required</b>	\$1m - \$1.2m per project		
<b>Public Realm Improvements</b>			
Streetscape Improvements	\$15.95 m		MassWorks, TIGER II
Conversion of One-Way Streets to Two-Way Streets	TBD		Chapter 90
Parking Facilities	\$2m - \$9.5m		Chapter 90
<b>Total Estimated Funding Required</b>	\$19m - 27.7 m		





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## 5. REQUISITE MUNICIPAL APPROVALS

## 5 760 CMR 12.02 (5): Requisite Municipal Approvals

The letters in this section demonstrate that the City has met the required steps in the approval process under 760 CMR 12.02(5) prior to submitting this plan to DHCD for its approval.

The language of the votes for each entity – the LRA, the Planning Board and the City Council – are included in this section. Certifications of each vote, and the letter from the LRA’s outside counsel, are included in *Appendix A Municipal Approvals and Letters of Support*. DHCD requires that the Massachusetts Historical Commission be notified of the public hearing held by the City Council; the letter of notification is in *Appendix G Notifications*. The published notice of the hearing is also in that appendix.

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### 5.1 Redevelopment Authority Approval

OCTOBER 21, 2016

Upon a motion made by Mr. Silverio and seconded by Mr. Rodriguez, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 121B, the members of the Lawrence Redevelopment Authority unanimously voted and determined that the area within The LawrenceTBD Urban Renewal District Plan Boundary constitutes a decadent, substandard or blighted open area, said LawrenceTBD Plan Boundary being particularly shown in Figure 1-1: The LawrenceTBD Urban Renewal Plan District (Plan Boundary) and included in the LawrenceTBD Draft Urban Renewal Plan dated October 2016.

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### 5.2 Planning Board Determination of Compliance

NOVEMBER 2, 2016

In consideration of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 121B and 760 CMR 12.02(2) (f), and upon motion made by Ms. Bernabel and seconded by Mr. Reynoso, the Planning Board for the City of Lawrence finds that the LawrenceTBD Urban Renewal Plan, as documented in the plan entitled, “LawrenceTBD Draft Urban Renewal Plan” dated October 2016, is based upon a local survey and conforms with the most current community plans for the locality as a whole, said community plans being specifically identified as follows:

- *City of Lawrence Comprehensive Housing Study*, August 2015 (Karen Sunnarborg Consulting, Charleen Regan Consulting, Abacus Architects + Planners)



- *Lawrence Downtown West Planning Study*, August 2015 (City of Lawrence, MassDevelopment, Utile)
- *Merrimack Street Land Use Planning Study*, 2016 (City of Lawrence, McCabe Consulting)

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### 5.3 Opinion of Counsel

DECEMBER 1, 2016

Attorney Lawrence P. Mayo, P.C. is the outside counsel to the LRA. In a letter to the LRA, dated December 1, 2016, he certified that the *Lawrence TBD Urban Renewal Plan* is in compliance with applicable laws in all material respects.

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### 5.4 Ordinance Committee

NOVEMBER 10, 2016

Councilor N. A. Rodriguez made a motion to forward this item to the Full Council to order a Public Hearing and Councilor J. Rodriguez seconded the motion. The vote of the members was unanimous in favor.

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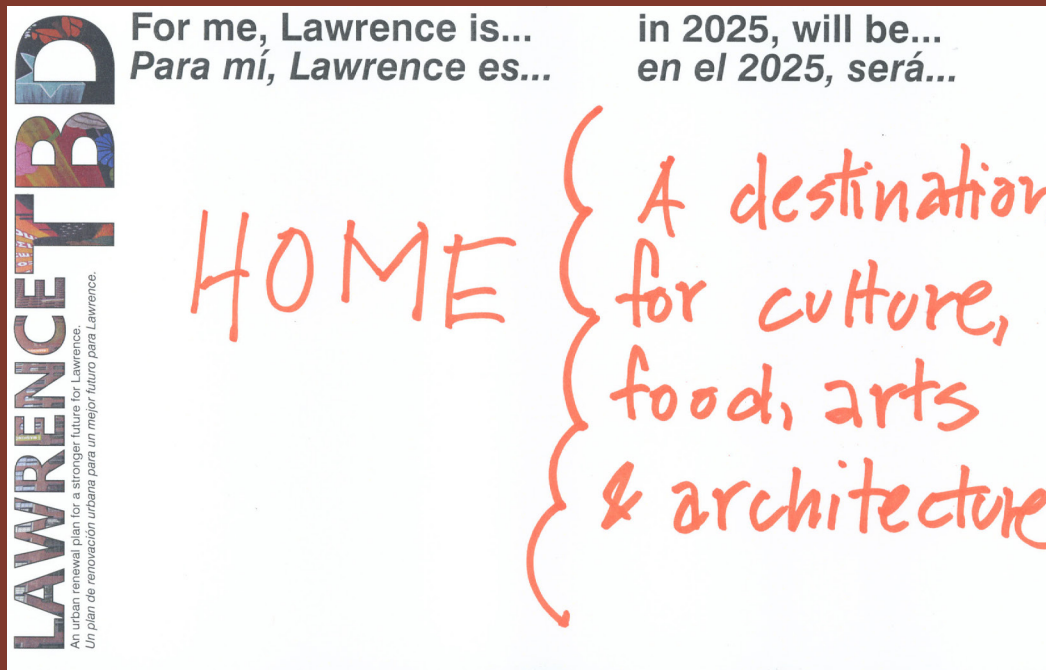
## 5.5 City Council Approval

DECEMBER 6, 2016

Councilor Nilka Alvarez-Rodriguez made a motion seconded by Councilor Estela Reyes as follows:

1. To approve the proposed urban renewal plan prepared on behalf of the Lawrence Redevelopment Authority entitled “LawrenceTBD Urban Renewal Plan,” dated November 2016; and;
2. To authorize the Lawrence Redevelopment Authority to make such change to the LawrenceTBD Urban Renewal Plan, dated November 2016, as may be necessary to obtain approval of said Plan by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development.

The motion was approve 8-0 (Councilor Brian DePeña was absent.)



LawrenceTBD

## 6. OTHER REQUIRED ELEMENTS

## 6 Other Required Elements

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### 6.1 Effective Date

This Urban Renewal Plan takes effect upon the date it is approved by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

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### 6.2 Duration of Controls

The provisions and requirements established in this Urban Renewal Plan and/or any modifications thereto shall be in force and effect for a period of twenty (20) years from the date of the original approval of the Urban Renewal Plan by the Department of Housing and Community Development.

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### 6.3 Other State Filings

Notice of the Urban Renewal Plan will be filed with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) office to fulfill the requirements of 301 CMR 11.00 et seq. (The filing is in *Appendix I Environmental Notification Form*.)

This plan may be amended prior to its expiration date. The LRA will need to file a new Environmental Notification Form with MEPA for each amendment.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission must be notified of the public hearing held by the City Council to discuss this plan. The notification letter is provided in *Section 5 Requisite Municipal Approvals*.

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### 6.4 Severability

Should any section, paragraph, or provision of this Urban Renewal Plan be rendered unconstitutional, or invalid, such decision shall not affect the whole or any part thereof other than the part so decided to be unconstitutional or invalid.



## 6.5 760 CMR 12.03: Process for Future Plan Changes

This plan has a time horizon of twenty years and may require updates in the future. The provisions of 760 CMR 12.03 specify two mechanisms whereby this plan may be changed: a minor plan change and a major plan change. All modifications will be added as Section 8 et. seq.

### MINOR PLAN CHANGE

The LRA may make a minor plan change through a resolution. Minor plan changes do not substantially alter the provisions of the plan.

Minor plan changes include the following:

- Correction of typographical errors
- Modification of proposed language of zoning changes and design guidelines to be consistent with language approved by the City Council

### MAJOR PLAN CHANGE

A major plan change involves a more substantial alteration of the underlying plan and, as such, requires a more complex approval process. The process for a major plan change is the same as was followed to produce this Urban Renewal Plan – evidence of a public hearing, certification of conformity with existing plans by the Planning Board, and approval by the City Council. All affected redevelopers must be notified and given an opportunity to comment.

### DHCD APPROVAL

All proposed minor and major plan changes shall be submitted to DHCD for approval.

760 CMR 12.07 does allow DHCD to waive any requirement of 760 CMR 12.00 under certain specific circumstances, including a catastrophic event, severe economic hardship, or an exceptional public benefit that can only be obtained by the granting of a waiver. Waivers must be requested in writing.

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## 6.6 760 CMR 12.02 (8): Relocation

This plan does not include a relocation plan as there is no anticipated project that would displace existing dwelling or business units.

Should the LRA undertake a project in the future that requires relocation, the LRA must amend this plan and include a relocation plan that conforms to M.G.L. Chapter 79A and any related regulations and guidelines. Chapter 79A applies to the relocation of the occupants of dwelling units or business units.

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## 6.7 760 CMR 12.02 (9): Redeveloper's Obligations

Redevelopers within the urban renewal area will be subject to the City's zoning ordinance, as may be revised according to the recommendations of this plan.

Redevelopers who purchase land within the urban renewal area from the LRA will be subject to a Land Disposition Agreement (LDA). This agreement will define any requirements specific to that property and any requirements the LRA has for the development of property in general. The LRA will require that all property subject to an LDA must follow the relevant design guidelines in this Urban Renewal Plan, whether or not the development is subject to Site Plan Approval. In addition, the LRA expects to require performance standards relative to the timing and completion of construction. Finally, the LRA is considering a preference for partners who commit to hiring Lawrence residents for both construction and permanent jobs.

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## 6.8 760 CMR 12.02 (10): Disposition

The LRA has no immediate plans to dispose of property as part of this Urban Renewal Plan, and there is no identified redeveloper at this time.



An urban renewal plan for a stronger future for Lawrence.  
Un plan de renovación urbana para un mejor futuro para Lawrence.

For me, Lawrence is...  
Para mí, Lawrence es...

My home, my hood,  
anywhere I can always  
come back to what my  
personality reflects. A  
place where opportunities  
are endless and people  
are resilient.

in 2025, will be...  
en el 2025, será...

It will continue  
to be these things  
but with more  
opportunities and  
more places  
that draw people  
from the greater law.  
region.

LawrenceTBD

## 7. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

## 7. 760 CMR 12.02 (11): Citizen Participation

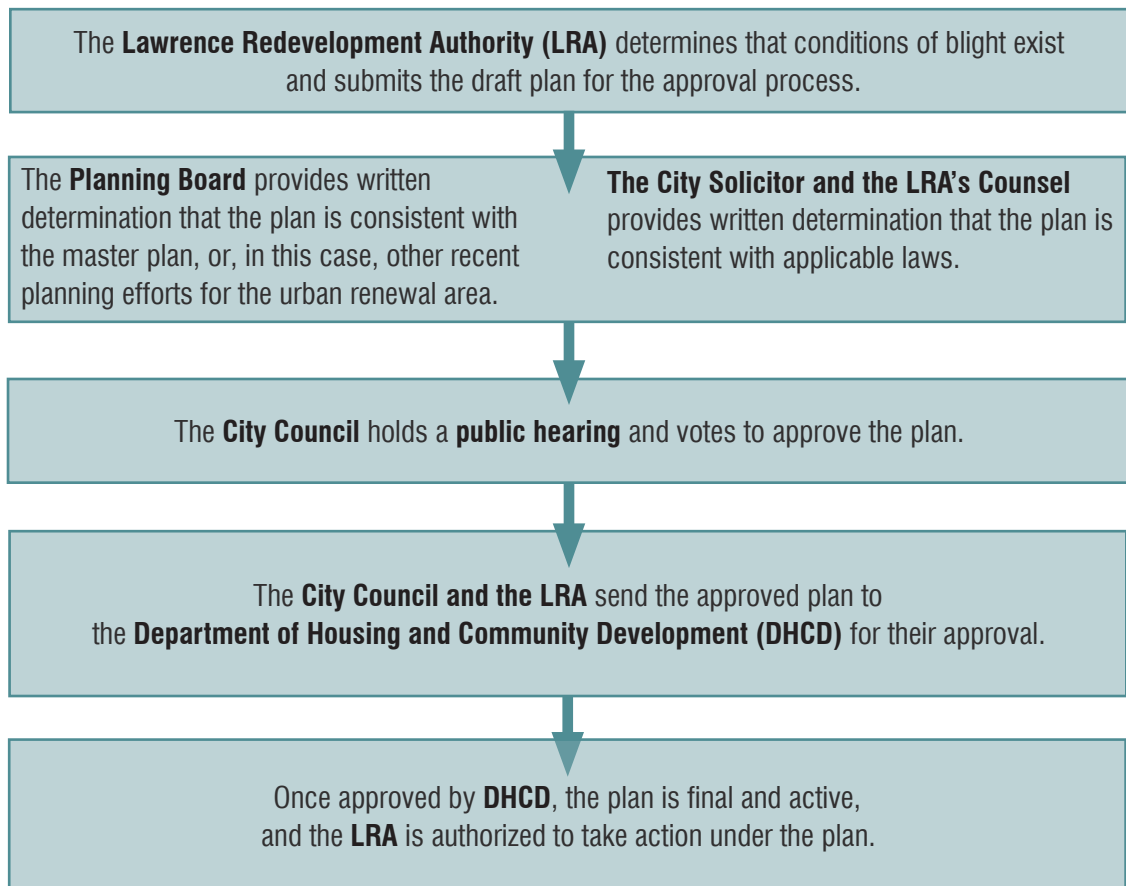
### 7.1 Participation in Plan Development

Citizen participation in the development of the Lawrence TBD Urban Renewal Plan took five forms:

- The appointment of a 25-member Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
- A series of three workshops open to the public
- Meetings with community organizations, representatives of City departments and State agencies
- Open houses at the beginning and end of the public process
- Online and paper surveys

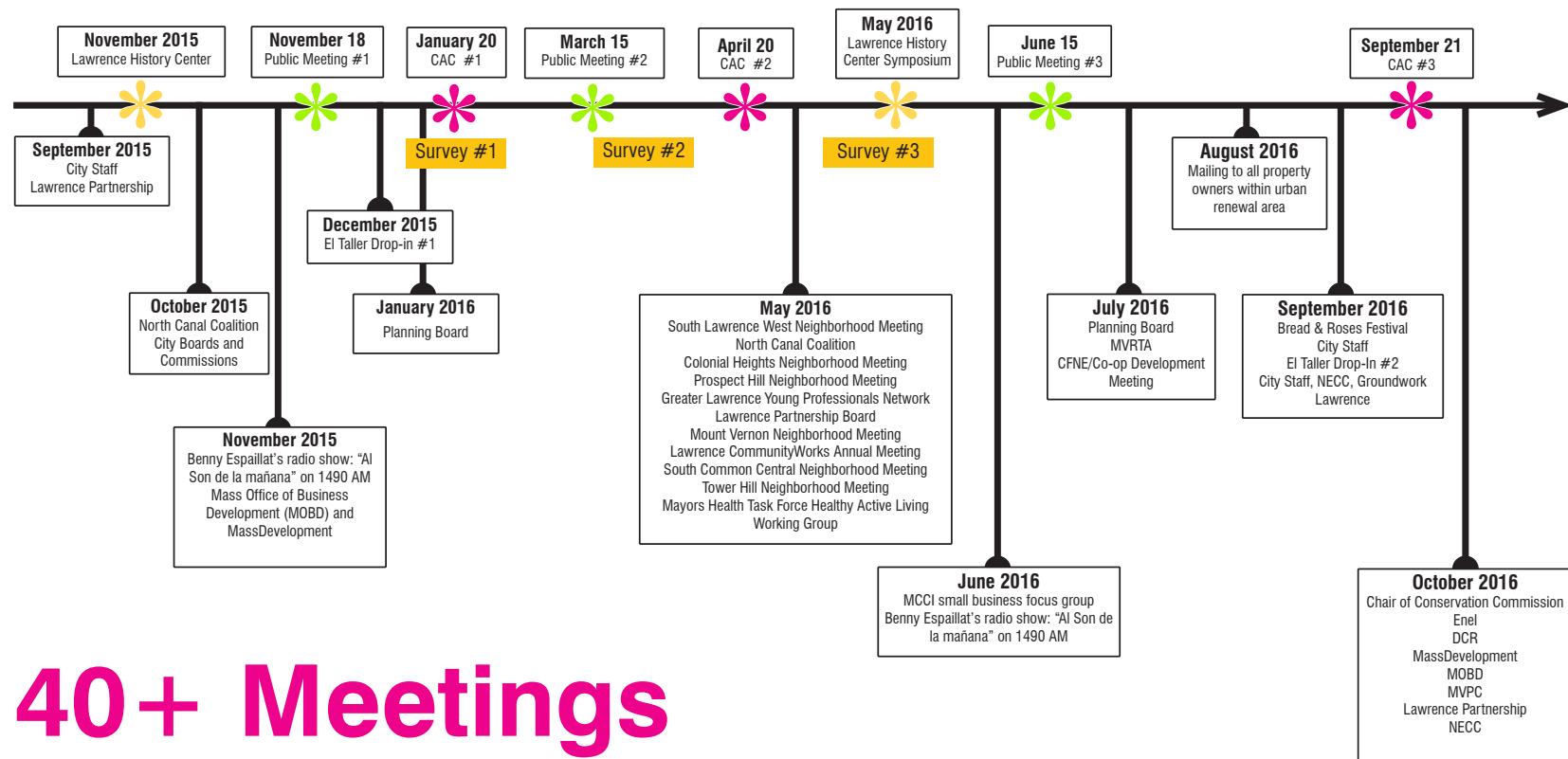
Members of the LRA and CAC led public outreach efforts which included both traditional methods, such as posting flyers, and the use of online social media. Members of the LRA and representatives of the consultant team appeared

#### Approval Process





## Public Process



**40+ Meetings**  
**400+ People\***  
 \*not counting radio or social media

on a local Spanish-language radio show twice during the study process.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CAC

The roles and responsibilities of the CAC were as follows:

- Provide input on the topics related to the urban renewal plan
- Review and comment on materials prior to the public meetings
- Review and comment on results received from the public meetings
- Review and comment on the draft urban renewal plan
- Reach out to other community members to inform them of the process and encourage them to participate in the public workshops

The CAC met in joint sessions with the LRA in January, April, and September 2016 and many members also participated in the public outreach sessions. In addition, five members

– Lynne Brown, Spencer Buchholz, Jonathon Nix, Dick Russell and Kiriza Zihahirwa – the Chair of the LRA, Kristen Harol, and a volunteer from City staff, Laiza St. Onge, assisted with the preparation of the inventory provided in *Appendix J Parcel Inventory*. Their assistance was a significant contribution to the development of this Urban Renewal Plan and the documentation of the existing conditions.

In January, CAC members were introduced to their role in the process, reviewed the materials from the November public meeting and the December event at El Taller, and provided input to the LRA and consultant team about the boundary of the Urban Renewal Plan. The adjustments to the final boundary for the urban renewal area were in response to this meeting.

CAC members who attended their meeting in April reviewed data from the March public meeting, commented on the revised vision statements, and were introduced to additional data relating to both the employment and real estate. The interactive session included a discus-

sion of strategies, related actions, and potential partners. The results of this session were used to develop the presentation for the June public workshop.

The final meeting of the CAC took place in September 2016. Members reviewed the work that had been done over the summer with respect to the implementation plan. The consultant team presented development scenarios that looked at different scales of development and the implications of available funding strategies on the possible project types. During the interactive sessions, CAC members discussed possible routes for the proposed MVRTA shuttle, funding strategies for the implementation plan, and design guidelines. Some members brought up the lack of housing that was affordable for existing residents of the area as a discussion point that should be explored in the last few months of the process; many of the strategies related to housing came from an exploration of that discussion.

## PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

Public workshops took place in November 2015 and in March and June 2016. Each workshop was divided into two parts: (1) a presentation that provided information and research about the study and posed questions to be answered during the workshop and (2) an interactive session designed to engage participants and ask them to apply their knowledge of the area and the information they had just received to answer the questions posed during the presentation.

The focus of the November workshop was to define the boundaries of the initial Study Area by examining how participants interacted with the area in terms of where they lived, where they worked, where they shopped or played, and how they travelled through and/or around the area.

In March, participants reviewed data that had been collected through both qualitative and quantitative research and used that data to identify where the LRA should focus their attention within the Study Area. Participants also pro-

vided comments on the draft vision which were incorporated into the final vision statement.

The June workshop identified more specific potential actions and tested the types of intervention – physical development, regulatory changes, and other actions – that might be appropriate for the LRA to undertake.

## OPEN HOUSES

El Taller, a café and bookstore located at 225 Essex Street within the urban renewal area, hosted two open houses – one in December 2015 to let the community know about the beginning of the process, and one in September 2016 to seek input on the draft plan.

Participants in the December drop-in created statements about what Lawrence meant to them now and what they hoped to see in the future.

Participants in the September open house were introduced to the draft implementation plan.

The Assessors' database of ownership information was used to generate a mailing list. Invitations to this open house were sent to all property owners on that list. *Appendix G Notifications* contains that list.

## SURVEYS

The first open house at El Taller kicked off the distribution of a paper survey that was available at El Taller and at the Office of Planning and Development for several weeks. Some of the results of this survey were used as the section dividers for this Urban Renewal Plan.

The consultant team also used Survey Monkey to generate two online surveys – one to test the vision statement and one to test participants' preferences and priorities for the strategies identified during this process. The first survey was also distributed in paper format at the public meeting in March. The second survey was distributed in paper form during the May public outreach effort at various community meetings.

## ADDITIONAL OUTREACH

Members of the LRA and CAC undertook additional outreach as noted in the graphic on page 7-3. This outreach effort, which took place throughout the process, included community nonprofit groups, neighborhood associations, City and State officials, and a presence at local cultural festivals. Members of the LRA and the consultant team also appeared on a local Spanish-language radio program twice during the process.

## APPROVAL PROCESS: FALL 2016

The LRA met on October 19, 2016 and voted to determine that the urban renewal area met the criteria for blighted, decadent, and substandard conditions.

Additional meetings for the approval process include the following:

- November 1: City Council

- November 2: Planning Board
- November 10: Ordinance Committee
- December 6: City Council

## RECORD OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Materials from the CAC meetings, the public workshops, the Open Houses and community meetings, and from the surveys are provided in *Appendix D Public Engagement Materials*.

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## 7.2 Participation in Project Execution

The LRA is responsible for the implementation of this Urban Renewal Plan.

## POLICIES AND PRACTICES

The LRA posts its agendas and minutes on the City's website. All public materials for the process of developing the Urban Renewal Plan are

posted at [www.LawrenceTBD.com](http://www.LawrenceTBD.com). At the end of the process, this website and domain name will be transferred to the control of the LRA.

## FUTURE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Meetings of the LRA are public meetings and are thus subject to the Open Meeting Law of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The LRA meets monthly on the third Wednesday of the month. Members of the public are notified in advance of meetings by agendas posted on the City's Public Meeting Calendar both online and at City Hall.





**Prepared for the Lawrence Redevelopment Authority  
by HARRIMAN/THE CECIL GROUP • FXM ASSOCIATES • Stantec • Bonz & Associates**